# Tuning the self

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# Tuning the Self

## George Herbert's Poetry as Cognitive Behaviour

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You cannot hide an eele in a sacke.

George Herbert's 'outlandish proverb' 762

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**Preface**

This book took shape after a five-day visit in September 2009 to George Herbert's church and rectory near Salisbury, England. Before that time the ICOG-graduate school in Groningen had financed my seemingly unpredictable and unproductive research. Returning from Salisbury, first to Wales, later to Groningen, it took me another year and a half to finish this book.

During all this time I could build on the wide-ranging research and thoughtful, precise supervision of Barend van Heusden. He encouraged me to continue when practically no one, including myself, knew what I was doing or heading for. I wish to thank him for his continuous and generous support.

Helen Wilcox has been a thorough reader and practical guide, greatly facilitating my writing and thinking. I thank her and Allan for spiritual guidance. The comments of the reading committee, in particular Ellen Spolsky, on an earlier draft of the manuscript encouraged me to make further improvements.

Mijn broers, wijzer dan ik doch jonger in jaren, bedank ik voor hun constante (stille) ondersteuning. Mijn ouders bedank ik voor alles. Dat we nog lang, in navolging van Herbert, onze ervaringen mogen blijven delen.

# chapter 1

## *Introduction*

Knowledge is no burthen

Outlandish proverb 692

### *1.1 Temperance and* The Temple

JESU is in my heart, his sacred name
Is deeply carved there: but th'other week
A great affliction broke the little frame,
Ev'n all to pieces: which I went to seek:
And first I found the corner, where was *J*,
After, where *ES*, and next where *U* was graved.
When I had got these parcels, instantly
I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
That to my broken heart he was *I ease you*,
And to my whole is *J E S U.*

This short lyric is part of *The Temple* (1633), a posthumously published collection of poetry, authored by the Renaissance poet and priest George Herbert (1593-1633).[1] In 'JESU' we find a basic dynamics described, which resonates throughout *The Temple*:[2] the speaker (persona) is at first one with Christ, as indicated in the first two lines of the poem, and finds this union disturbed when experiencing an 'affliction' (3), that is, a painful experience; resolving this affliction, he restores the relationship with Christ, adding to its meaning with the passing of time.[3] During or after the affliction, the 'little frame', the speaker's heart with Christ's name 'deeply carved there', is broken.[4] Heart-broken, disconnected from God, the speaker starts his search, picking up the

[1] All references to *The Temple* are to the latest critical edition, *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: CUP, 2007). Considering the content of the later chapters of my study, which reflect on interpretative practice, rather than take part in it, I stay as close as possible to the accepted, critically shared, meaning of Herbert's work, which can be deduced from this fully annotated edition of *The Temple*. For 'JESU', see Wilcox (2007), p. 400.

[2] See also 1.4.

[3] 'Affliction' is an important concept in *The Temple*, and the title of five of its lyrics.

[4] According to Wilcox, Herbert employs *Frame* to mean "[created] form or structure. The word is used by

pieces one by one, retrieving his lost heart and the separate letters connected to it. A creative act is needed to restore the order of the beginning of the poem: 'spelling', possibly meaning to write, read, or interpret in imitation of God and his Word,[5] allows the speaker to restore his heart, and the union with Christ, to order under divine guidance. In the process, the heart, broken and restored, has come to bear the connotation that Christ 'eases' the afflictions of mankind.

While ill at ease for large parts of *The Temple*, Herbert's personae can thus live with the confidence that God will save them in a world, including its 'afflictions', which is of His making.[6] The experience of order is the result of a sound union with God and Creation, while disorder is the outcome of a temporary falling out – or falling apart, following the imagery of 'JESU'. The main process to be controlled in life, then, is man's relationship to God, and, as a result, to the world: one can achieve stability in one's life by constantly pursuing this control. In 'The Temper (1)', also included in *The Temple*, Herbert alludes to this principle, indicating the possible place of his poems in this process.

> How should I praise thee, Lord! how should my rymes
> Gladly engrave thy love in steel,
> If what my soul doth feel sometimes,
> My soul might ever feel! (1-4)

In this short passage, Herbert hints at the complexity of what is to be controlled. He seeks to control God's love, or, more precisely, his soul's condition as a result of this love. He thus aims to employ his poetic craft to stabilise ('engrave') God's love for the benefit of his soul. This stabilisation demands a constant watch on the changing conditions of life; or, more specifically suited to this particular passage, a constant affiliation with poetry, if it can meet its desired purpose. In this respect, Helen Vendler has noted that both the poem and the poetic self rendered in 'The Temper (1)' are in need of constant 'reinvention', if it is to fulfill its own demands.[7] If, as Herbert's near-contemporary fellow poet and priest John Donne put it, in early modern life "Inconstancie unnaturally hath begot / A constant habit" (Holy Sonnet 19: ll. 2-3),[8] that is, if change and inconstancy are inevatible parts of early modern experience, slowly but surely separating itself from the all-covering grasp of the Catholic church, this stability is an activity that requires constant 'reinvention' of the self and one's place in the world.

What would be the strategies available to Herbert and his readers to 'reinvent' the self? And

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Herbert to refer to a range of kinds of creation: the universe (…), the world (…), the human body (…), the heart (…), the temple building (…), and the form of a poem" (*The English Poems*, xlii). See also 2.6.

[5] See Wilcox (2007), xliv. 'Spelling' is also a central concept in *The Temple*. See also Chana Bloch's study *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible.* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1985).

[6] See Helen Vendler, *The Poetry of George Herbert* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 71-72.

[7] Vendler (1975): pp. 39-41.

[8] Included in *Complete English Poems*, ed. C.A. Patrides (Boston, MA: Tuttle Publishing, 1994).

how can poetry play its part in this apparently vital process? What is a 'self', anyway? Herbert himself is unclear about these matters, although they seem to shape his poetics. What he is clear about, however, and keeps coming back to, is that a precondition for a stable relationship with God is a firm grasp of the 'self'.[9] Herbert conceptualises this constant controlling of the self, controlling one's 'temper', as *temperance*. A brief exploration of the etymology of temperance can tell us more about its operations. The *Oxford English Dictionary*[10] indicates that temperance, now limited to the use of *OED* 2a, meaning 'teetotalism', had wider implications in the early modern period, denoting self-restraint in the mind to control the passions (*OED* 1, 1b, 3b), and in actual behaviour (1a.). This restraint was to be maintained actively and could, by analogy, be imposed as a kind of dynamic harmony on one's surroundings, as indicated in 3a, which glosses temperance as "[the] action or fact of tempering; mingling or combining in due proportion, adjusting, moderating, modification, toning down, bringing into a temperate or moderate state."[11] In short, then, temperance is a kind of behaviour that allows both physical and mental self-control; by analogy, it can be applied to exert control over one's surroundings.

Herbert thus aims to temper the self (body and soul, physically and mentally) through changing conditions; he would seem to use his poetry to describe *and* effectuate this process. But how can his poetry be employed to this purpose? Is there any significant connection between its contents and its operations? One meaning of temperance, now obsolete but in use in the early modern period, may help us a bit further here: it echoes the particular 'tempering' function of music, and thus of lyric poetry, which has traditionally been associated with music:[12] temperance could signify **"**the keeping of time in music" (*OED* 3c). This can be understood better if we remind ourselves of E.M.W. Tillyard's early insight that the Elizabethan world picture endorsed a view of reality as changing in a "perpetual dance" (94). The created universe was conceived of as musical; God's creation of the world involved the creation of musical structure.[13] In this sense, temperance becomes the act of according to the larger order of the world: tuning one's self to God's creation, or rather, preparing oneself to be tuned by God. Self-restraint, the tempering of the self, comprises according with the larger musical order in which one takes part.[14] As Herbert asserts in 'Providence', also included in *The Temple*: "all things are 'tun'd by thee, / Who sweetly temper'st all" (ll.38-9) – God controls the world by structuring its dynamics in musical patterns.

[9] Herbert's main prose treatises, *A Priest to the Temple* and *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie*, explore individual and social strategies to reaffirm this grasp. See below. See also his 'Outlandish proverb 537', also the motto of chapter 4: 'Helpe thy selfe, and God will helpe thee.'

[10] *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), hereafter *OED*.

[11] See also *OED* 4: "Moderate temperature; freedom from the extremes of heat and cold; mildness of weather or climate; temperateness." (Obsolete, the *OED* records usage from 1432-1610)

[12] Cf. David Lindley, *Lyric* (London: Methuen, 1985).

[13] E.M.W Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture. A Study of the Idea of Order in the Age of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton* (first ed. 1943, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970): pp. 94-9.

[14] This idea of according one's self to the larger order of creation lies at the basis of the Platonic and Augustinian conception of self-control. Cf. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989): pp. 115-42.

Further on in 'The Temper (1)', Herbert acknowledges the musical structure of the world, while playing on the specific function of his lyrics within this all-encompassing 'perpetual dance':

> Yet take thy way; for sure thy way is best:
> Stretch or contract me thy poore debter:
> This is but tuning of my breast,
> To make the musick better. (21-24)

Addressing God, Herbert's persona requests to be included in God's 'way': the specific directions that God has in mind for the persona's life. The stretching and contracting of the body invokes the image of the strings on a lyre, which can be tuned by elongating or shortening them, thus echoing the body of Christ on the cross, traditionally depicted as lyre or harp.[15] To Herbert, this is the ultimate aim of observing temperance: allowing oneself to be tuned, in order to follow God's will, imitating the 'way' that Christ took before. Once the 'breast' – the heart and soul – is tuned, Herbert's persona can be incorporated in God's order, making the music 'better'. Possibly designed to regulate the reader's condition and prepare one to be tempered by God, Herbert's poems would seem to be instrumental in the process of God's tempering and tuning. If poetry can serve to regulate the self, Herbert's poetry, which abounds with specific instances of the 'inconstancies' of a Christian life, could allow his readers to be tuned to creation, making them fit to follow Christ. For the moment, however, this is mere speculation, a metaphor for a process that might or might not exist: in the following chapters I aim to substantiate this metaphor both theoretically and historically.

### *1.2 George Herbert's writings*

Who was George Herbert, what were his aims in life, and how can we relate these personal characteristics to his poetry and its supposed 'tempering' qualities? A short excerpt from his brother Edward's autobiography can serve as an introduction to his character:

> My brother George was so excellent a scholar, that he was made the public orator of the University in Cambridge; some of whose English works are extant; which, though they be rare in their kind, yet are far short of expressing those perfections he had in the Greek and Latin tongue, and all divine and human literature; his life was most holy and exemplary; insomuch, that about Salisbury, where he lived, beneficed for many years, he was little less than sainted. He was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our race is subject, but that excepted, without reproach in his action.[16]

[15] See Rosemond Tuve, *A Reading of George Herbert* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952): pp. 144-6. For a similar image, see 'Easter' (included in *The Temple*) ll. 7-12.

[16] In *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage* , ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1983). The complete title of this source is *The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*. According to Patrides, the year of publication is uncertain.

Herbert served as a parish priest from 1630 to 1633 in Bemerton, near Salisbury in the southwest of England. He arrived at his calling relatively late in his life, being first trained as a classical scholar at Westminster School, London, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became a fellow, and was elected public orator of the university in 1620. He officially resigned from this post in 1628, and was ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 1630, performing this function until his death in 1633.[17] Presumably, Herbert started working on the poems for *The Temple* as a Cambridge scholar. These poems were first published in Cambridge in 1633, shortly after Herbert's death.[18] From then onwards *The Temple* enjoyed a steadily increasing fame. It was reprinted in 1633, 1634, and 1635, going through as many as thirteen editions from 1633 to 1709, "being widely read, cited and imitated by readers from a staggering range of political and denominational affiliations."[19]

An early draft of *The Temple*, the Williams manuscript (W), has survived. A second draft, the Bodleian manuscript (B) could perhaps have been the master-copy for the Cambridge publication of *The Temple* in 1633.[20] The collection itself consists of three main parts: *The Church-Porch*, a long didactic poem directed to a 'youth', *The Church*, the main section of the book, mostly expressing specific instances of spiritual experience in short lyrics, and *The Church Militant*, which is concerned with Herbert's vision of the past, present and future of the Christian church. Some poems in *The Temple* are explicitly didactic, others depict the specific objects to be found in the church (the altar, church windows, the church floor, among others) or the landmarks of the Church-calendar (Easter, Christmas, Lent, Whitsunday). Most poems are self-reflective, expressing specific episodes of the Christian life, balancing between the despair of the individual believer and the grace of God. In the words of T.S. Eliot, "*The Temple* as a sequence of poems [sets] down the fluctuations of emotion between despair and bliss, between agitation and serenity; and the discipline of suffering which leads to peace of spirit."[21] This is a recurrent pattern in *The Temple*: "every [success] is followed by the reintroduction of the problems that were supposedly left behind."[22] In his poems, Herbert depicts both the flux of human life, and the way to temper this life by disciplining oneself, paying considerable attention to the spatial and temporal landmarks of the Anglican Church. Although reading and devotional activities were often communal, rather

[17] For more biographical detail, see Helen Wilcox, "George Herbert", *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); Amy M. Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (London: Cornell University Press, 1977); and Cristina Malcolmson., *George Herbert, A Literary Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[18] See Charles, pp. 66-104, and Anthony Martin, "'To Do a Piece of Right': Edmund Duncon and the Publication of George Herbert", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010): pp. 181-94.

[19] Helen Wilcox, "Entering *The Temple*: Women, Reading, and Devotion in seventeenth century England", in *Religion & Politics in Post-Reformation England*, eds. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 187-207: p. 188.

[20] Wilcox 2007, xxxvii-xl.

[21] T.S. Eliot, *George Herbert.* (1964, Plymouth, UK: Northcote House Publishers, 1994): p. 29.

[22] Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Cemtury Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1972): p. 216.

than individual, practices in Herbert's time, in *The Temple* Herbert explores individual relations between man and God, addressing readers individually.[23] As Joseph Summers has observed, "*The Temple* could be read as every Christian's autobiography";[24] in it, Herbert found ways to express the universal condition of the Christian life by recounting his own spiritual struggles of the past.

Herbert brought little of his writing to the public, striving for the perfection that is also apparent in his poetry. In the introduction to his anthology of Herbert's writings, George Herbert Palmer acknowledged this as characteristic of the poet and priest: "The passion for perfection was in his blood. This, joined with his love of beauty and his pride of birth, lent distinction to whatever he produced, though limiting its amount."[25] Herbert left a relatively small portion of texts behind. All of these, though differing in topic and style, are connected in their overall aim. Concerned with the health, the balance or 'temper', of his Christian community, Herbert produced two treatises concerned with strategies to maintain corporeal and communal, or social, health. He addresses corporeal health in *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie* (*TTS*), first published in 1634.[26] *TTS* is Herbert's translation of Cornaro's *Discorsi della vita sobria* (1558).[27] It comprises a relatively short treatise, recounting how Cornaro, as an old man and after a life plagued with disease, has learnt to become his own physicisian by controlling his own diet, resulting in balance in all other aspects of his life. A second treatise of Herbert's making, *The Countrey Parson; Or, A Priest to the Temple* (*Priest*),[28] first published in Oley's *Herbert's Remains* (1651),[29] extends the principles of tempering the individual body to the Christian community. In *Priest*, Herbert proposes the proper conduct of a country parson, possibly modelled on Herbert's personal experiences and reflections in his own parish in Bemerton.[30] Addressing his readers in its opening pages, Herbert explains that he has "resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour",[31] providing a very practical account of situations that a country parson may find himself in while leading the way for his congregation, offering an ideal method to cope with these situations. This treatise presents

[23] This strategy, of addressing individuals in communal practices, will be explored further in chapter 1. See also Greg Miller, *George Herbert's 'Holy Patterns': Reforming Individuals in Community* (New York: Continuum, 2007).

[24] Joseph H. Summers, *George Herbert, His Religion and Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954): p. 17.

[25] Palmer 1907, 26.

[26] In Hutchinson, 291-303.

[27] Cf. Hutchinson 291. Possibly, this translation was also based on a Latin translation made by Leonard Lessius, who included it in his own treatise *Hygiasticon: Or. The right course of preserving Life and Health unto extream old Age* (1613), cf. Hutchinson, 564-5.

[28] In Hutchinson, 223-290.

[29] According to Charles, this treatise was 'seen to' by Mr. Barnabas Oley, Herbert's first biographer. Charles argues that its subtitle, *The Countrey Parson*, was probably the title originally intended by Herbert. Cf. Charles: pp. 186-7.

[30] Cf. John Chandler, "The Country Parson's Flock: George Herbert's Wiltshire Parish", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton,* ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010): pp. 158-172.

[31] *Priest* 224.

us with a first-hand rendition of Herbert's ideals in his life as a country parson: "[a]lthough it seems at first to be simply a handbook, it is rather a self-portrait that reveals Herbert's methods of representing himself socially."[32] Providing the rules of a parson's life, then, *Priest* seems to serve to help Herbert (and his fellow-parsons) "that he may be an absolute Master and commander of himself, for all the purposes which God hath ordained him" (*Priest*, 227). Apart from these treatises and his Latin poems, some of which were published during his life, Herbert produced a series of notes on doctrinal matters, which were later published as *Briefe Notes on Valdesso's* Considerations (1638).[33] In these notes, Herbert provides corrections to Valdesso's statements on the significance of the Bible, and Christian life in general. Valdesso's treatise shares its main concern with the two treatises of Herbert's own making, summarised in Herbert's remark that Valdesso is a "very diligent observer" of the "many pious rules of ordering our life."[34] This topic, the 'rules of ordering life', appears to be the common denominator of Herbert's writings. Seeking to accord 'selves' with the larger Christian order of the world, he seems to have designed his writings to achieve this pastoral aim.

It is a critical commonplace that the early modern period saw the empowerment of the individual: after the strict social order of the Middle Ages started to subside, people were increasingly able to take their lives into their own hands. Herbert's drive to manipulate 'selves' fits into this development; it is closely related to Stephen Greenblatt's influential critical notion of 'self-fashioning', as formulated in his seminal work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), which denotes the manipulation of 'selves' in early modern texts and culture. A short look at Greenblatt's definition of this process indicates that Herbert's metaphorical 'tempering of the self' could refer to a widespread practice. Greenblatt defines self-fashioning as "the power to impose a shape upon oneself" (1). He notes a distinct transition in the sixteenth century to an "increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2). In Greenblatt's study, the "self" is depicted as "a sense of personal order" (1); "the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity – that of others at least as often as one's own," and "[t]he Augustinian, Christian tradition stipulates that self-fashioning must take place in imitation of Christ" (3).[35] Greenblatt's self-fashioning, then, appears to be closely related to Herbert's 'temperance'. Herbert seems to have aimed for a similar kind of 'self-fashioning' for his readers, possibly assigning a specific place to poetry in this process; the active manipulation of the self serves the purpose of temperance, and poetry could be a means to this end. In order to ground this hypothesis, derived from our brief sketch so far, we require a theoretical perspective by means of which we can substantiate that Herbert's metaphorical

[32] Cristina Malcolmson, *Heart-Work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999): p. 27.
[33] In Hutchinson, 304-320.
[34] *Briefe Notes* 304-5.
[35] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

conception denotes an actual process. A theory is called for that can map how 'selves' survive in the world, how they encounter order and disorder, and how poetry can serve as a specific tool to accomplish stability. We need a theory that can distinguish particular kinds of 'self-fashioning', of which Herbert's *Temple* could be one – a theory that can unite Herbert's and Greenblatt's thinking. To this purpose, we turn to the cognitive sciences, the dominant modern discipline that concerns itself with the nature of human identity.

*1.3 A cognitive approach to the arts*

In recent years, cognitive, evolutionary explanations of art and culture have started to emerge.[36] Characteristically, a cognitive approach should account for art and culture as specific forms of interaction between (human) organisms and their (physical and social) surroundings. In a recent study, Reuven Tsur has indicated how a cognitive approach to literature should serve to explore this function:

> Cognitive Poetics (…) offers cognitive theories that systematically account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects. By the same token, it discriminates which reported effects *may* legitimately be related to the structures in question, and which may not.[37]

A cognitive poetics aims at giving *structural* explanations of literature and its effects, aiming to discover the laws that govern literary representation.[38] Art and culture are conceived of as mechanisms that are governed by laws: discovering these laws should be the primary aim of a cognitive poetics. In a more traditional vein, and quite distinct from the structural explanations of art and culture, cognitive / evolutionary theory has also been applied to interpret art: what we might term *cognitive criticism* has produced a vast stream of studies in the past ten years.[39]

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[36] Cf. Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution*. New York: Bloomsbury Press. 2009; Brian Boyd, *On The Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2009); Ellen Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy: How the arts began* (Seattle, WA: The University of Washington Press. 2000), and Robert Storey, *Mimesis and the Human Animal: On the Biogenetic Foundations of Literary Representation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1996). Brian Boyd has categorised four main current strands, to explain the evolution of art: Art as by-product of evolution, art as sexual selection, and art as adaptation, either enhancing group cohesion or the organisation of the individual mind. Cf. Brian Boyd, "Evolutionary Theories of Art", in *The Literary Animal: Evolution and the Nature of Narrative*, eds. Gottschall, Jonathan and D.S. Wilson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005): pp. 147-176. A cognitive approach to art and culture tends to treat art as adaptation.

[37] Tsur, *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics. Second, expanded and updated edition* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008): p. 1.

[38] See Barend van Heusden, "Semiotic Cognition and the Logic of Culture." *Pragmatics & Cognition* 17:3 (2009): pp. 611-27. For an introductory cognitive perspective on reading, cf. Peter, Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

[39] Explanations of art are often combined with interpretative practice, cf. Boyd 2009. Among others that have tackled traditional literary topics with cognitive theory, see Mary T. Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). Evolutionary

Whereas some 'cognitive critics' maintain the traditional methods of the humanities, applying concepts gained from cognitive science to create new categories by means of which artefacts may be interpreted, others aim at a more fundamental integration of literary studies with the empirical sciences, resulting in kinds of 'literary science', an example of which we can find in recent studies of Jonathan Gottschall.[40] This more radical position is adopted in studies of the biological foundations of art and culture, in which one tends to look for explanations for the existence of art, or, as Ellen Dissanayake has formulated it, "the relevance of evolutionary theory to literature and literary theory is that it provides a firm basis for considering literature's relevance to life."[41] The overall aim is to determine the working of literature in the body/brain;[42] in this tradition, literature, art, and culture are thought of as ways of enhancing the capacity of human beings to function and survive.

Applying cognitive theory to Herbert, the aim of my study is to consider *The Temple* as a means to stabilise cognitive processing in Herbert's (imagined and actual) pastoral community, enhancing its stability as a whole. If, as Helen Wilcox has asserted, "Herbert wrote in an era when the chief credential of literature was its capacity to change lives for the better,"[43] cognitive theory can help us to analyse this capacity. I do not intend to use this discipline to herald a *cognitive turn*, or any paradigm-shift of this sort. By contrast, my aim is to present a cognitive theory of culture which can complement existing critical practices, addressing issues and formulating questions that the critical Herbert- tradition did not, or could not, generate before. If, in the words of Norman Holland, 'the experience of literature' is a "curious combination of individuality and shared humanity,"[44] a traditional historicist approach would aim to describe the individuality, the uniqueness, of this experience, differentiating the contexts, genres, and traditions in which it is situated, whereas an evolutionary approach would aim to study its universal, 'shared', characteristics.[45] In critical work done on Herbert and *The Temple*, the former, historicist approach is dominant. My aim here is to give shape to a perspective in which the universal, 'shared' characteristics of *The Temple* can be explored, without losing sight of its unique, historically determined, qualities.

Current cognitive theorising is closely tied with the theory of evolution. David Geary's broad definition of cognition can serve to explain this bond: "From an evolutionary perspective, cognition encompasses the mechanisms that enable the organism to attend to, process, store in

criticism has come to be known as *Literary Darwinism*, which originated in the work of Joseph Carroll in the 1990s: cf. Caroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), and Caroll, *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature and Literature* (New York: Routledge. 2004).

[40] Cf. Gottschall, *Literature, science, and a new humanities* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2008).

[41] Dissanayake, "Darwin Meets Literary Theory", in *Philosophy and Literature* 20.1 (1996), 229-239: p. 232.

[42] Cf. Ellen Spolsky, "Toward a Theory of Embodiment for Literature," *Poetics Today* 24.1 (2003): pp. 127-37; and Norman Holland, "Where is a Text? A Neurological View," *New Literary History* 33.1 (2002): pp. 21-38.

[43] Wilcox 2007, xxx.

[44] Norman Holland, *The Brain of Robert Frost: A Cognitive Approach to Literature*. New York: Routledge, 1988): p. 70.

[45] Cf. Brian Boyd, "Jane, Meet Charles: Literature, Evolution and Human Nature". *Philosophy and Literature* 22 (1998): pp. 1-30.

memory, and retrieve from memory the information patterns that have tended to co-vary with survival and reproduction during the species' evolutionary history".[46] Cognition involves all the mechanisms that are operant when an organism interacts with its surroundings; the functioning of these mechanisms determines the *fitness* (the degree to which organisms can adapt to their surroundings), and thus the survival chances of any given organism. Geary's definition indicates that the storage and retrieval of experiences, the complex of representations of reality in the memory, coincides with cognitive processes. Controlling these processes, ensuring the stability of organisms, in effect stabilising themselves within their surroundings, is essential for survival.

How to proceed? It is clear that modern cognitive theory shares many of Herbert's concerns. In the context of Herbert's striving for temperance, we should look for a theory that can appreciate Greenblatt's 'self-fashioning' as a cognitive process, while characterizing the specific kind of self-fashioning that is provided in poetry. Such a theory would help us to explain what a 'self' is in terms of cognition, and how it can be controlled – and *why* it is important to control it. To this purpose I have adopted a theory of art as a form of mimetic self-knowledge,[47] primarily based on Merlin Donald's theory of the evolution of human culture and cognition. Donald first proposed this theory in *Origins of the Modern Mind (*1991).[48] In this study, Donald presents a theory of cognitive evolution, which draws from paleontology, linguistics, anthropology, cognitive science and neuropsychology. It received extensive peer-reviewing from all of these fields,[49] strengthening its position, and was followed by a second study *A Mind so Rare* (2001),[50] in which Donald explored the consequences of his theory of cognitive evolution for the study of human consciousness. Applying a Donaldian theory of culture to Herbert and *The Temple* should provide a better insight into the nature of temperance, including the role of poetry in this process.The human representational, cognitive, system has evolved into the use of symbols and language. From an evolutionary perspective, language arose from selection pressures on early hominid cultures – selection pressures towards an increasing stability of humans, surviving in their surroundings.

[46] David Geary, *The Origin of Mind: Evolution of Brain, Cognition, and General Intelligence* (Washington: American Psychological Association. 2005): p. 202.

[47] See Merlin Donald, "Art and Cognitive Evolution," in *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford: OUP, 2006): pp. 3-20. Donald's theory breathes new life into a view of art as *mimesis*. This perspective goes back to at least Plato's *Republic*, in which mimesis is the derogatory attribute of art, an imitation of imitations, twice removed from the ideal forms, and to Aristotle's *Poesis*, in which the concept of mimesis is reviewed more favourably to cover the natural human inclination to imitate. Michael Kelly has opposed Aristotle's and Auerbach's aesthetic approach to mimesis to the more biologically determined model of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, re-emerging in the work of Paul Ricoeur, but largely ignored in recent critical theory (cf. Cf. Michael Kelly, "Mimesis", in *The Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics, vol. 3* (Oxford: OUP, 1998): p. 233.

[48] Merlin Donald, *Origins of the Modern mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[49] Cf. Merlin Donald, "Précis of *Origins of the Modern Mind* with multiple reviews and author's response", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences,* 16 (1993): pp. 737-791.

[50] Donald, *A Mind so Rare: the Evolution of Human Consciousness* (New York: W. W. Norton., 2001).

Evolutionary accounts of the human species often center on determining when, how, and why language came into being, scrutinising its relation to our cognitive apparatus.[51] Explaining this relation is often considered as crucial for our understanding of human culture and its specific characteristics, as Merlin Donald has indicated:

> Human symbolic culture constitutes a distinctive, species-universal trait, usually thought to be the result of our having evolved special cognitive capacities, such as language. Seen from this vantage point, the flow of influence runs from cognition to culture, in that order, and the task of evolutionary psychology should be to decide how and when the basic cognitive foundations of modern culture came into being.[52]

Donald's central thesis, however, is that language was not the only, and also not the earliest cognitive capacity that constituted, and continues to drive human culture. In Donald's thinking, what preceded language in the human cognitive apparatus was intentional, representational behaviour, which first came about in what he has labeled the evolutionary stage of *mimetic* cognition and culture. From the mimetic stage onwards, the evolution of our species was driven by at least two mechanisms, which, combined, determined its course. According to Donald, when describing the evolution of the human species, we should acknowledge these two mechanisms, and distinguish between two time-scales on which this evolution is set: "the slow time of evolution by natural selection, and the compressed time of human cultural evolution".[53] From

[51] Seeing that language is often taken as the cognitive trait that separates humans from other species, it should come as no surprise that the recent history of cognitive psychology is intertwined with linguistics. Cognitive modelling gained strength with Noam Chomsky's theories of language acquisition in the 1950s, which aimed at discovering the universal structure of language, based in a supposed 'language device' in the brain. Before that, theories on the nature of body and mind had developed from a strict Cartesian dualistic perspective to the first forms of psychology as an independent discipline, late in the nineteenth century, represented in the introspectionist movement of Edmund Husserl and William James, which mainly studied the mind. This paradigm was replaced by its opposite in the work of behaviourists as John Watson and Burrhus Skinner, which focused solely on the interaction between the body and its surroundings, labeling the mind a 'black box', which could not be studied without subjective influences. Behaviourists were the prime opponents of Chomsky and the early cognitive movement, which started to study the mind as 'information-processing device'. This 'first cognitive revolution' resulted in a second one in which the mind has been studied as an integral part of its embodiment and (social) surroundings (Cf. David Herman, "Narrative Theory after the Second Cognitive Revolution," in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010): pp. 155-175; and Rom Harré, "Introduction: The Second Cognitive Revolution." *American Behavioral Scientist* 36 (1992): pp 5-7. See also Howard Gardner, *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); and Graham Richards, *Mental Machinery: the Origins and Consequences of Psychological Ideas. Part 1: 1600-1850* (London: The Athlone Press, 1992). The early separation of body and mind, effected by the Cartesian tradition, then, has been abolished in modern cognitive theories of the mind. For a cognitive defense of this position, see Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York, NY: Quill, 2000). Never before did psychological theory fit better to Herbert's own conceptions of human behaviour, in which body, mind, and soul are integrated parts of the same (God-given) system.

[52] Merlin Donald, "The Central Role of Culture in Cognitive Evolution: A Reflection on the Myth of the 'Isolated Mind'", in *Culture, Thought, and Development*, ed. L. Nucci (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000): pp. 19-38.

[53] Jiro Tanaka, "Consilience, Cultural Evolution, and the Humanities", in *Philosophy and Literature* 34.1 (2010),

this perspective, accounting for the characteristics of cultural evolution is necessary if we want to unravel the complexities of human culture.[54] Biology brought our species to a point where it could accelerate, and increasingly determine, its own development. Crucial for the purposes of our study is Donald's elaborate investigation of the self as a cognitive process: the self as meta-cognition.[55] In his conception, meta-cognition is a self-regulating process, inherent to human cognition. The human self is a necessary process, and not a mere by-product of our neural machinery. Donald accounts for art as a term that refers to an underlying process: mimetic meta-cognition.[56] From this perspective, then, poetry is 'a form of self'. Whereas Greenblatt's conception of self-fashioning appears to be largely ideological (the self as product of social norms and power structure), Donald's theory allows a more diverse picture of ways in which the human self can be manipulated, making it particularly suited for a study of Herbert's thinking and *The Temple.*

### *1.4 Back to Herbert and* The Temple

The seventeenth-century popularity of Herbert's poetry was part of a larger trend. English devotional verse flourished in the early modern period. Authors like Robert Southwell, John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Andrew Marvell enjoyed a considerable popularity. The most obvious explanation for this fame lies in the increased distribution of texts in this period: in the years between 1620 and 1642 (at the start of the Civil War) printed books became available to the public in rapidly increasing numbers,[57] creating the possibility for literature to develop.[58] By 1656 *The Temple* was used as a "storehouse" of "doctrines and knowledge", a phrase Wilcox derives from the seventh edition of *The Temple*, which included an "Alphabeticall Table for ready finding-out of places", to be used to justify religious, doctrinal,

32-47: p.36.

[54] On this topic, see Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: OUP. 2006), 'Memes: the New Replicators', pp. 189-201.

[55] See Donald 2001, and Barend van Heusden, "Semiotic Cognition and the Logic of Culture," in *Pragmatics & Cognition* 17:3 (2009): pp. 611-27.

[56] See Donald 2006.

[57] Zwicker estimates this development from approximately 500 printed copies per title throughout the 1620s, towards approximately 4,000 printed copies per title in 1642. Cf. Steven N. Zwicker, "Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture", in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 170-198: p. 189.

[58] Other explanations that have been given for this increasing popularity include the general interest taken in lyric poetry in this period, and numerous practical ways in which devotional poems were applied, most notably theological discussions on doctrinal positions, characteristic of the seventeenth century. Cf. Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Renaissance* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), part 2, 'The Reformation of the Reader' (57-101). Helen Wilcox has mapped the contemporary response to *The Temple*, dividing it in nine distinct categories: the direct response from Ferrar's Little Gidding community; the imitation of *The Temple* among religious poets in the 1640s; Herbert's significant reputation among Royalists; the importance of Herbert and his verse to poets of the mid-seventeenth century, such as Crashaw and Vaughan; the popularity of *The Temple* as a devotional and didactic text for non-conformists; the interest taken in Herbert's biography by the Restoration establishment; the application of *The Temple* to justify religious verse in the late seventeenth century, both in Europe and New England; the setting of Herbert's lyrics to music, particularly into hymns; and the devotional acceptance, yet stylistic rejection of his verse by the beginning of the eighteenth century. See Helen Wilcox, "'Something Understood': The Reputation and Influence of George Herbert to 1715," (Diss. U of Oxford, 1984).

positions, or inspire devotional practice. As part of this process, *The Temple* functioned as a kind of seventeenth-century Scripture. "[Selective] readings and interpretation made *The Temple* like the Bible, available to justify and enrich a variety of devotional approaches."[59] With the renewed interest in Herbert's verse in the twentieth century, this practice was also revived in critical readings of his work; apparently, it forms an inseparable part of the reception of *The Temple*, inherent to the ways that readers can respond to the text.

Popular in the seventeenth century, Herbert's verse was out of fashion in the eighteenth. It regained some of its popularity in the nineteenth century, most notably by means of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's praise of Herbert in his, in literary and critical circles influential *Biographia Literaria* (1817). Herbert's works were again collected and published by the Reverend Alexander Grosart in 1874.[60] George Herbert Palmer's three volumes on Herbert, *The Life and Works of George Herbert* (1905), [61] complemented by the interest taken in Herbert and his fellow metaphysical poets in the criticism of T.S. Eliot in the early twentieth century, reinstated Herbert's popularity, making him the focus of literary criticism, a practice that has continued ever since.[62] Modern critics have re-enacted the seventeenth-century reception of Herbert's verse, attempting to claim him for distinct doctrines, and reconstructing his theological or ideological positions.[63] In *The Poetry of Meditation* (1954),[64] Louis Martz suggested that the most important influence on Herbert's verse was the Continental counter-reformatory tradition of meditative practice. Martz thus argued for a dominant influence of Roman Catholic devotional practices on English religious poets in the time of Herbert. Barbara Lewalski, in *Protestant Poetics* (1979), argued that the Bible was the main aesthetic model to inform Herbert's writing. These two extreme positions have set the stage for approaches focused on reconstructing the doctrinal positions that might have influenced Herbert's work. This kind of ideological critical interpretation of *The Temple* has formed a dominant strand in the Herbert-tradition up to this day.[65] Apart from the critical,

[59] Wilcox 1984, 160-1.

[60] Alexander Grosart, ed. *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of George Herbert*. London: Robson's and Sons (1874).

[61] Palmer, ed. *The Life and Works of George Herbert,* Three volumes (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1907).

[62] For overviews of the reception of Herbert, up to the 1930s, cf. Patrides (ed.); Robert H. Ray (ed.) *The Herbert Allusion Book: Allusions to George Herbert in the Seventeenth Century*, special issue of *Studies in Philology* 83.4 (Fall, 1986); Wilcox 1984.

[63] For an overview of this practice up to 1988, see G.E. Veith, Jr., "The Religious Wars in George Herbert Criticism: Reinterpreting Seventeenth Century Anglicanism," in *George Herbert Journal* 11.2 (1988): pp. 19-35. See also Richard Todd "Historicisms and George Herbert", in *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane* , eds. Helen Wilcox and Richard Todd (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995): pp. xi-xviii.

[64] Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

[65] See, for instance, Richard Strier, *Love Known. Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983) on Herbert and Calvinist doctrine; Christopher Hodgkins, *Authority, Church, and Society in George Herbert: Return to the Middle Way* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993) on Herbert and Anglican doctrine; and R.V. Young, *Doctrine and Devotion in 17th-Century Poetry* (Cambidge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), who retraces Herbert's position to a medieval tradition, starting with St. Thomas Aquinas.

doctrinal readings of *The Temple*, however, Herbert's poems have also continued to serve "as catalysts to spiritual events,"[66] resulting in more experiential, spiritual readings of his work.[67]

It would seem that both the ideological, critical and the more spiritual, personal readings of Herbert could help us further in understanding his pastoral poetics. Personal readings could tell us whether *The Temple* had the effect that it was designed to have. Critical readings should make clear in which traditions and social settings Herbert could pursue his struggle for temperance. What these kinds of readings do not provide, however, is an explanation of why he thought temperance so important, and how *The Temple* could serve as a potential tool in this process. For this, we require more than a personal reading of Herbert's verse, and more than an ideological positioning of the author in his time. What we addtionally need, then, is a structural explanation of poetry as part of the human self, if we want to recover the systematic thinking that underlies this vision of pastoral life. Theoretical approaches of Herbert's poetry that value this systematic thinking have been rare, both in our own and in Herbert's time. In his introduction to *The Critical Heritage* of *The Temple* and with regard to its reception in the first decades after its first publication, for instance, C.A. Patrides has remarked that

> [t]he critical heritage of George Herbert was initially determined by a gathering reputation centred largely on his piety. As the publication of 'The Temple' in 1633 appeared to confirm that piety, it should not surprise us that scarcely any surviving opinion values its poetry as poetry.[68]

Writing some 45 years after the first publication of *The Temple*, Samuel Speed construed his 'Prison Pietie' (1677), from which the following excerpt is taken. He commented on *The Temple* at a time when Herbert's country had gone through the turmoil of political, social, and religious change:

> …such is the looseness of this Age, that many are of the opinion, that Divinity in verse is unpleasant to the ear and to the heart: let such be convinced by the Psalms of *David*, or the Song of his son *Solomon*. Divine verse hath these two operations: it is pleasant, and makes an impression in the memory of the reader; so true is that of the excellent Mr. *Geo. Herbert*, University Oratour of *Cambridge*.[69]

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[66] Kristine A. Wolberg, *'All Possible Art': George Herbert's* The Country Parson (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008): p. 133.

[67] For recent examples of more personal readings of Herbert, cf. Philip Sheldrake, *Love Took my Hand: The Spirituality of George Herbert* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2000); and Joseph L. Womack, *Working it Out: Growing Spiritually with the Poetry of George Herbert* (Richmond, Virginia: RKW Publications, 2009).

[68] C.A. Patrides, ed., *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1983): p. 1.

[69] In Patrides, p. 136. Original source: Speed, 'Prison-Pietie: or, Meditations Divine and Moral. Digested into Poetical Heads' (1677).

Speed's comments inspire questions which shall take us into the next chapters: Why does literature manifest itself *in this way*? What is the specific kind of impression that it makes on the memory of the reader? What is the exact relationship between the human mind and poetry? How does Herbert's poetry enable his readers to deal with a rapidly changing reality? What is its function in relation to what Michael Schoenfeldt has called "[the] early modern fetish of control"?[70] Our aim, then, is to reconstruct the reading processes attached to Herbert's *Temple*, to analyse the specific literary nature of these processes, and to explain why they function as they do. In a cognitive theory of culture these questions can be addressed from a universalist perspective.

### *1.5 The structure and contents of this study*

What the motto to this chapter expresses, that knowledge is to be aspired to, reflects Herbert's lifelong dedication to learning and teaching. The proverb itself is part of his learning; during his life, he gathered a large collection of sayings, mostly of foreign origin.[71] As an Anglican priest, Herbert undoubtedly used his proverbs, which express general truths on the condition of life, in his sermons. He valued them highly as received wisdom, gathered from different times and places. Imitating his style, I have selected seven proverbs to precede and conclude each chapter of this study, not only to let them regain their old illustrative function, but also to demonstrate that Herbert's thinking on the conditions of human life coheres seamlessly with recent perspectives on the evolution and structure of our species, developed in the cognitive sciences. If Herbert's proverbs provide the motif of the chapters to come, *The Temple* and its position in his self-reflective theorising on the priestly profession are my main targets of analysis. The theoretical framework within which to further explore and explain these self-constructions and the poems is derived from the cognitive sciences. This range of disciplines shares with Herbert that it offers reflections on the principles of the human mind, more specifically of the embodied 'self'. My hypothesis, to be substantiated in the following chapters, is that *The Temple* was designed to regulate body and mind, thus providing distinct advantages for those reading it. I aim to demonstrate that this self-regulatory function of *The Temple* was central to Herbert's poetics, while fitting in with his overall conception of the priesthood. He designed his poems as tools, which were to be used by the Christian community to direct oneself towards God.

The aim of this study, then, is to understand and explain how Herbert sought to achieve order, the 'temperance' of body and mind, by means of *The Temple*. All the material presented in

[70] Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 18.

[71] These proverbs can be found in *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), pp. 321-362. All references to Herbert's primary texts are to this edition, except for references to *The Temple*. Herbert's proverbs were published in 1640 as *Outlandish* [Foreign] *Proverbs Selected by Mr. G.H.*, augmented in 1651 to 1190 proverbs, then published as *Iacula Prudentum.* They were included in Barnabas Oley's *Herbert's Remains, or Sundry Pieces of that Sweet Singer, Mr. George Herbert* (1652), which also contained Herbert's prose treatise *A Priest to the Temple, or the Countrey Parson*, and a short biographical introduction on Herbert's life.

subsequent chapters ultimately serves this purpose. Starting from this perspective, it becomes possible to re-assess a range of issues connected to *The Temple*. A secondary aim is to present the potential of an approach in which literary issues and phenomena, both historical and contemporary, can be explained systematically. In the presentation of this potential, I have opted to start with Herbert, first establishing his aims and the influence of his pastoral existence and of his writing on his readers, before taking a step back from a strictly historical approach to present the cognitive framework for the study of literature. All the, seemingly remote, issues addressed in later chapters reflect back on Herbert and *The Temple*, and help to understand his position, just as his historical presence can serve to address general principles in the study of literature, while clearing our way through the cognitive sciences.

The structure of this study should reflect these aims. The second chapter, *Reading Herbert*, maps how Herbert's *Temple* has been read, and how his reading of the Bible shaped his verse. This chapter sets out to understand the design of *The Temple*, and the culture in which the book fulfilled its work. It establishes Herbert's intermediary position between God and his readers, identifying the embodied nature of the *Temple*, a joint space in which Christians may gather as a group, and meet their pastor to be taught and healed. The third chapter, *Framing*, reconstructs Herbert's pastoral poetics. From *TTS* and *Priest* his modelling of corporeal and social temperance is reconstructed. *TTS*, a treatise on the maintenance of health in the individual human body is thus interpreted in analogy with *Priest*, which deals with the dynamics of the Christian community. Combined, these treatises offer strategies to temper the self: *The Temple* fits in this framework. The fourth chapter, *Explaining*, is designed to allow the relating of Herbert's pastoral poetics to a theory of culture as cognition. This chapter integrates a Donaldian cognitive theory of culture into an explanatory framework analogous to the pastoral and poetical framework sketched in the second chapter. The fifth chapter, *Re-membering* The Temple, establishes how the theory developed in the previous chapter suggests a more exact and complete recognition of Herbert's *Temple*. It attempts to explain Herbert's aims as a parson, and how he sought to achieve these aims by means of his writing. In this chapter, then, we develop a perspective that considers Herbert's treatises and poetry as complementary, all serving him to serve God's community. The sixth chapter, *Synthesising*, considers the general tendencies that shaped the argument in the first four chapters, and relates these to other attempts made to integrate the cognitive sciences and the humanities, both in Herbert's time and our own.

In pursuing the implications of temperance as a private, corporeal and social practice, and the relevance of this strategy to Herbert's pastoral and poetic tasks, a range of associated issues cannot be addressed. For one, I do not aim to position Herbert in doctrinal traditions, nor to read and interpret his poems in the light of modern cognitive science. Unless necessary for the topics at hand, I have also largely refrained from dwelling on the parallels between a cognitive theory of art and earlier critical attempts to study the reception process, most notably reader-response

criticism.[72] Focusing solely on Herbert and his ideals and explaining these from a cognitive perspective, I shall also not argue that Herbert's pastoral poetics was representative of his time, nor attempt to extend his reading strategies to make them representative for his own day and age.[73] Addressing these matters would go beyond the scope of this study, which is an attempt to reconstruct this historically singular modelling of life, and the place of poetry in that system, while providing a modern, empirically grounded perspective on his own theorising.

The challenge that is presented here is to look for common ground between more traditional critical work on Herbert and the cognitive sciences. This has resulted in a book that by necessity mingles historical and theoretical considerations, which may result in an occasionally awkward change of tone and topic. At all moments I have tried to indicate that this way of presenting the material does not hamper a thorough critical understanding of Herbert, while it also reflects the quest for a unity of knowledge that he himself pursued in the latter stages of his life. In short, then, 'knowledge is no burthen': there is a lot about Herbert that we do not know, not because we have not discovered the relevant facts yet, but because of the limitations of our methods of understanding him. These limits resemble the boundaries that Herbert himself sought to transgress to serve his pastoral aims in the most exact manner possible. The recognition of these limits may both enlighten our view of Herbert, and our ways of seeing him. A cognitive theory of art and culture can serve to pursue both of these aims. If this study can serve as a first step towards a more Herbertian analysis of Herbert, in which we recognise his work for what it represents in his own thinking, it fulfils its aim.

[72] For an overview of the history of reader-response theory, see *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post- Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[73] Seeing that Herbert posthumous reputation as ideal and holy poet, the 'sweet singer of the Temple', gained him a large following of poetic imitators (some of whom feature in the following chapters), this argument could easily be made. For the practice and politics of reading in early modern England, cf. E.R. Küntgen, *Reading in Tudor England*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996); K. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2000), and K. Sharpe and S.N. Zwicker (eds.), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

# chapter 2

## *Reading Herbert*

Hee that hath charge of soules transports them not in bundles

Outlandish proverb 986

### *2.1 Introduction*

The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct the main principles of how *The Temple* was read in the seventeenth century, and how Herbert wanted it to be read. Herbert's purposes for his verse can be derived from the reading strategies that he himself employed in attempting to integrate the Bible with the daily experiences of his life – a process which serves as one of the main topics of *The Temple*. In turn, his verse, and by poetic mediation the Bible, was to be integrated in the lives of his readers.

Focused solely on God and the proper working of the Christian community under the guidance of God, Herbert was more concerned with the possible beneficial effects of his poetry than with its aesthetic, intrinsic value; for him, the quality of *The Temple* was to be judged by its effects on the reader, rather than its isolated characteristics. These effects, which should support the parson's task of transporting souls along God's ways, existing within the larger Christian framework that governed the lives of his readers, were to occur in an imagined poetic space, built up with each reading of *The Temple*, enabling a meeting with God through Herbert. In this imagined space, a temporary union of Herbert and his readers became possible. This union between the poet and his readers served one single pastoral purpose: a temporary hint of divine guidance that should result in the purification of readers' souls. To achieve this, readers of *The Temple* were to be affected 'not in bundles', but one by one: each reader was to be purified by individually adhering to, and applying, Herbert's pastoral poetics.

### *2.2 The Temple*

Most of the poems in *The Temple*, or more specifically the lyrics of its central section 'The Church', centre on the relationship between a persona (or several personae, depending on how one wishes to interpret this) and God. This relationship unfolds problematically; while several

endings of poems seem to provide temporary states of harmony in the spiritual narrative of the personae, within the poems this harmony is disturbed.[1] This constantly recurring process reflects the dynamics of the fallen state of man, moving between the tranquillity and stasis of Heaven and the restlessness and instability of the world. A primary function of Herbert's verse is to make its readers understand these dynamics. In the opening poem of *The Temple*, its 'Dedication' directed to God, Herbert indirectly invites his readers to re-live the personae's struggles and moments of relief, by joining him in his poetry:[2]

> Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee;
> Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came,
> And must return. Accept of them and me,
> And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.
> Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
> Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.[3]

In these lines Herbert addresses God, while exploring the relationship with his readers. The first four lines present the dynamics of *The Temple*: its words, heavy with Biblical echoes, have been created by God and are presented back. As Michaels Schoenfeldt has indicated in his comments on this short introductory poem, Herbert characteristically deflects the attention from his own poetic craft to acknowledge God's authorship of human lives.[4] In the Christian conception, when God writes, He creates: *The Temple* is, at best, a subordinate kind of creation. God's creative power, His language, is offered back in poetic form in the shape of the poet's 'first fruits'. Having made this offer Herbert turns to the reader, while still directing his voice to God, in the final two lines of this poem. In these lines, God is requested to provide *The Temple* with the appropriate readers, by '[turning] their eyes hither', that is, to *The Temple*, and receive its beneficial effects. Devotion to God by means of *The Temple* can only occur when readers focus their attention on its language. The aim of this private union between readers and verse is 'to make a gain': the beneficial effects that come with reading the poems. This short introductory poem, then, does its preliminary work by joining Herbert and his readers in shared devotional activity during the reading of *The Temple*, specifically asking for personal, attentive engagement.

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1 Cf. 'Denial', 'Jesu', 'The Temper (1)', which display this development from temporary disturbance to the regaining of harmony.

2 This twofold direction of Herbert's rhetoric (towards God and his readers) has lead Joseph Summers to categorise *The Temple*-poems as kinds of public prayer: for "[u]nlike the sermon, the prayer was addressed to God rather than to the congregation, yet it was delivered in the presence of the congregation, and listeners must understand and join their silent prayers with the spoken one." In Summers, *George Herbert, His Religion and Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954): p. 104.

3 In *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 45. All references to *The Temple* are to this edition. Below, page numbers are included in the main text.

4 Cf. Michael C. Schoenfeldt, "Submission and Assertion: The 'Double Motion' of Herbert's 'Dedication'", in *John Donne Journal* 2.2 (1983): pp. 39-49.

To Herbert, this beneficial, privately experienced effect of *The Temple* on its readers seems to have been the only justification for its existence. In the reputed final words that he spoke regarding *The Temple*, he stressed that the value of his work should lie solely in its purpose: it was to perform its function as a continuous act of recognition of the Christian life. Herbert conceived of his poems as a means to an end; if isolated from their intended function they could be burnt, as far as he was concerned. Izaak Walton, his near-contemporary biographer, reports that on his death-bed, delivering the *Temple*-poems to his executor Mr. Edmund Duncan, Herbert spoke the following words to this end:[5]

> 'Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Farrer, and tell him, he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master: in whose service I have now found perfect freedom. Desire him to read it; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made publick; if not, let him burn it; for I and it are less than the least of God's mercies' – [Walton continues:]Thus meanly did this humble man think of this excellent book, which now bears the name of *The Temple, or Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*; of which Mr. Farrer would say, 'There was in it the picture of a divine Soul in every page; and the whole Book was such a harmony of holy passions, as would enrich the World with pleasure and piety'. And it appears to have done so: for there have been more than Twenty thousand of them sold since the first Impression.[6]

Nicholas Ferrar (or Farrer, as it is spelled here), to whom the book was to be handed over after the poet's demise, went on to arrange the first publication of *The Temple* in 1633.[7] The difference between Herbert's perspective on *The Temple* and that of Ferrar and Walton, indicated in this small extract from Walton's *Life*, is striking and important. Both Herbert and Ferrar refer to the contents of *The Temple* as a 'picture',[8] but they differ in their views on what is being depicted. Herbert speaks of 'a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and [his] soul'; to him, his poems invoke images of life, a continuing cycle of harmony and disharmony in his relationship with God. Thus, he identifies with the personae: the poetic personae of *The Temple*

[5] The historical accuracy of this account has been questioned, but it has played a crucial role in the reception of Herbert's work. See, for instance, Amy Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (London: Cornell University Press. 1977). According to Charles, Duncan was Walton's direct source for this account (179).

[6] In Izaak Walton, *The Complete Angler & The Lives of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert & Sanderson* (1670. London: Macmillan and Co, 1906): p. 417.

[7] For more on Ferrar and the community that he installed in Little Gidding, and Herbert's close ties with both Ferrar and the doctrines and practices of this community, see for instance Paul Dyck, "'So Rare a Use': Scissors, Reading, and Devotion at Little Gidding," in *George Herbert Journal* 27.1&2 (2003-4): pp. 67-81.

[8] The *OED* lists various definitions of this term that were in use during Herbert's life. A *picture* could signify a concrete image, which could be involved in the process of conceptualisation, and serve as an illustration of an abstract idea. Cf. *OED*, *picture*: 'I. A visual representation'; '5. A vivid or graphic description, written or spoken; *esp*. a description emblematic or illustrative of a particular concept, quality, or character; an impression or understanding formed by such a description'; '7a. A concrete representation or illustration of an abstract idea or quality'.

act out his past. Ferrar, by contrast, seems to identify with the effects that Herbert's poetry can have on the reading public, stressing only its 'harmony', and, by analogy, the spiritual perfection of its author.[9] From Ferrar's perspective, *The Temple* bears 'the picture of a Divine Soul in every page'. Rather than stressing that it presents the spiritual conflicts of a Christian individual, he praises the book as 'a harmony of holy passions'.[10] Whereas Ferrar seems to conceive of Herbert's poems as static, perfected holy states, Herbert himself presents them as dynamic, unfolding depictions of his past.

There is a clear difference in perspectives, then, from which Herbert and one of his first, attentive readers reflected on the contents of *The Temple*: both perspectives are part of the reading experience connected to this text. Walton ascribes Herbert's seemingly humble view on his own verse to his being a 'humble man', implying that Herbert's interest lay with his reading public, not with the verse itself; he would only allow his book to survive, if it was to 'turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul.' Ferrar became one of the readers who experienced this effect, which seems to depend on the ability to turn the depiction of Herbert's struggles to one's advantage.

How can we reconcile these apparently opposite experiences? At this stage, we cannot. We can, however, turn to an insightful critical study for some preliminary answers. The matters spelled out above are related to the issues that Stanley Fish is grappling with in his study of Herbert's poetry, *The Living Temple* (1978).[11] Fish's study was informed by his own theoretical perspective as a reader-response critic: it focused specifically on the reading processes that could be generated in connection to *The Temple.* The central question of his study, as Fish formulates it, can help us to reflect on the different perspectives taken by Ferrar and Herbert: "Herbert criticism should ask the question posed by its own shape and history: how is it that a poet and the poetry he writes can be restless and secure *at the same time*?"[12] In his subsequent chapters, Fish explains the apparent concurrence of order and instability in terms of 'the reading situation'; in his analysis, the poet speaks from a superior position of acquired knowledge and order. While writing, the poet looks back at his past, and thus he can control it, while the readers of *The Temple* experience its turmoil afresh during the reading process, destabilising their (self-) knowledge in the process. Fish's

[9] This connection between the virtue of the author and his verse was common in Herbert's early reception. Joseph Summers has indicated "the enormous popularity of *The Temple* in the mid-seventeenth century," which, he presumes, during that time was appreciated more because of the supposed piety of the author than because of its literary accomplishments. Cf. Summers, 113. This kind of appreciation was something of a convention. Steven Zwicker mentions that the predominant written responses to the early modern reading of literature consisted of "imitation", "admiration", framed in the "exemplarity" of the admired author. ("Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture" 182-189), in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002): pp. 170-198.

[10] This contrast continues to inform readings of Herbert. In his "Finding Readers: Herbert's Appeals to the Passions" (In *George Herbert Journal* 26.1&2 (2002-3): pp. 65-82), for instance, Sean McDowell distinguishes two classes of *Temple*-poems, those representing harmony and those representing spiritual torment (72-74).

[11] Stanley Fish, *The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978).

[12] Fish 1978, 5.

explanation, then, reverses the experiences recounted in Walton's biography, while also noting a discrepancy between the perspective of the author and that of the reader. Walton suggests that Herbert associated his poetry with instability, while Fish claims that this experience should occur to Herbert's readers, rather than to Herbert himself; Ferrar's experience of divine harmony while reading *The Temple* seems to conflict with Fish's conception of destabilised readers. Merging Walton's and Fish's accounts, we can come to the preliminary conclusion that Herbert's troubled self-experience is somehow transferred to the readers' experiences of reading *The Temple*; readers were asked to identify with the poet, just as the poet should grasp the essential aspects of readers' experiences. By reading Herbert's verse and re-experiencing his poetic struggles, by submitting and committing oneself to its instabilities, one could aspire to a temporary experience of harmony, framed in short unions with God.

### *2.3 Characteristics of the reception of* the Temple

As indicated in its dedication, *The Temple* appears to have occupied an intermediary position between God and its readers; Herbert's readers attributed this intermediary position to the poet himself. In *A Priest to the Temple*, Herbert refers to God as the "perfect Artist";[13] a similar perfected craftsmanship was attributed to him. Associating Herbert's artistry with the teaching of the catechism, treating his verse as a didactic tool, Stanley Fish has remarked that to Herbert's contemporary readers "Herbert stands to God as his readers stand to Herbert."[14] Mediating divinity in *The Temple*, Herbert's experiential teachings-in-verse were conceived of as (partly) divine, perfected in themselves as is evident from Ferrar's early response to it: by extension the poet and teacher, the 'Divine Soul' who offered these teachings, was considered to be holy. While reading *The Temple*, then, Herbert's readers faced two sanctified craftsmen: God, creator of the world (the Book of Nature) and of Scripture, and Herbert, creator of *The Temple*.

Herbert's status as perfect artist cohered with the status of his verse: if the Bible was the word of God, *The Temple* was increasingly considered as a lyrical appendix to Scripture, a Christian version of the Psalms.[15] Helen Wilcox has noted the analogy between the response of Herbert's readers to *The Temple* and his personal response to and reliance on the Bible: "Herbert's admirers came to rely upon his example and his work in a way closely resembling Herbert's own attitude to the Bible"; thus, "Herbert's Temple became a kind of seventeenth-century Scripture".[16] By

[13] In F.E. Hutchinson (ed.), *The Works of George Herbert* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 283. All references to Herbert's prose writings are to this edition; page numbers are cited in the main text.

[14] Fish 1978, 167.

[15] According to Barbara Lewalski, Herbert "undertakes nothing less than the task of becoming a Christian psalmist, transposing (…) the element of biblical art upon a Christian lute resounding in harmony with Christ's cross" ( in Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics in the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979)).

[16] Helen Wilcox, "'Heaven's Lidger Here': Herbert's *Temple* and Seventeenth-century Devotion", in *Images of Belief in Literature*, ed. David Jasper (MacMillan, 1984), 153-168: p. 153. See also Wilcox, "'Something Understood': The Reputation and Influence of George Herbert to 1715" (Diss. U of Oxford, 1984) [1984b],

extension, Herbert's personae and his role as a poet occupied intermediary positions between the readers and God. Richard Todd has noted that "Herbert's interpretation of his relationship to God is revealingly analogous to the act of interpretation performed by the reader of his verse."[17] This seems accurate, yet incomplete. Herbert also asked of his readers to mimic a distinct *experience*: that of falling in and out of favour with God.

The qualities that Herbert sought in the Bible, his readers could attain by reading *The Temple*; in both reading experiences, the individual and the communal should merge into one dynamic process. Helen Wilcox has remarked that "just as Herbert discerned a dual function in Scripture – active but comforting, specific yet inclusive – so it seems that Herbert's followers reacted to him with a similar pattern of devotion and response."[18] Herbert thus seems to have taken the general truths of the Bible, transforming these to private experiences in his verse; in this way, he merged the communal and the individual in the same reading process. In her study on Herbert's usage of the Bible, Chana Bloch has pointed out that in a process of self-discovery Herbert makes the Bible's words his own, translating Biblical phrases to a first person perspective.[19] Occupying its intermediary position, *The Temple* appears to have functioned as a first-person experiential translation of Scripture, presenting a re-living of the doctrines of The Bible that he wanted to convey to his audience. In turn, during the reading processes, readers would translate his perspective to their own, thus re-creating a first person perspective in which Herbert's exemplary digesting of the Bible could take shape again and again in their own lives.

Herbert's readers thus breathe fresh air in his exemplary re-living of The Bible with every re-reading of the spiritual conflicts that Herbert represented in poetic form. To accomplish this, a distinct activity is demanded from the reader, an activity that is directed by the specific structure offered in *The Temple*:

> Once the reader has listened to the proverbial, preaching manner of "The Church Porch", most of the hundred and fifty shorter poems of "The Church" do not require passive reception on the part of the reader, but participation. The first-person style turns the reader, in effect, into the protagonist of the poems. (…) Those who enter *The Temple* in order to read become the articulators of love and frustration, doubt and devotion, not the recipients of them.[20]

pp. 40-94, in which is suggested that, and explored how, *The Temple* served as a poetic model for Herbert's followers.

[17] Richard Todd, *The Opacity of Signs. Acts of Interpretation in George Herbert's 'The Temple'* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986): p. 2.

[18] Wilcox 1984, 155.

[19] Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1985): pp. 9-45.

[20] Helen Wilcox, "Entering *The Temple*: Women, Reading, and Devotion in seventeenth-century England", in *Religion & Politics in Post-Reformation England*, eds. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 187-207: p. 189.

Some reading experiences are still available in the written responses to Herbert's work.[21] As far as I can surmise from the reception documents, the success of his verse in appealing to individual readers, and in working to their advantage, hinged on three processes that operated simultaneously. Firstly, Herbert's poems were conceived of as crafted structures, where a meeting between the poet-teacher and the reader could take place. Secondly, the poem and the reader were to be inseparable for as long as the reading process lasted, requiring a distinct activity from the reader to achieve and maintain this junction. Thirdly, this union of the poetic text and the reader allowed a specific operation: the purification of the reader's soul, which could take place by re-living the spiritual conflicts recounted in the poems. It suffices here to describe these characteristics in short. *Why* they existed like this requires a better grasp of the specific poetic relation between Herbert and his readers: this is the topic of the following chapters.

To enable a meeting with his readers, which was required if they were to re-live his spiritual narrative and join him in devotional practice, Herbert needed to create a shared poetic space that could be entered during the reading process. That he succeeded frequently in doing this can be deduced from responses of contemporary readers of *The Temple*, in which his craftsmanship is compared to that of a builder, an architect.[22] In his poem "On Mr. Herberts Devine Poeme The Church" (1633?) John Polwhele has indicated that he perceives Herbert as having erected some kind of structure, in which the meeting with the reader can take place.

> Haile Sacred Architect
> Thou dost a glorious Temple raise
> stil ecchoinge his praise. (ll. 1-3)[23]

[21] Steven Zwicker has asserted that, as a continuation of medieval reading practices, "writing was among the most widespread habits of reading" in the early modern period, with the notable difference that whereas medieval written responses to reading practices are largely found in the work of clergymen, in the Renaissance

> [The] powerful and regulated impulses of humanist education spread annotation far beyond the professional class of readers. Marginalia in the Renaissance were the property not only of cleric and scribe, but of aristocrats and their secretaries, of scholars and schoolboys, and eventually, of a wider, more socially diverse and, by the middle of the seventeenth century, more contentious and combative field of readers. (Zwicker, "Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture," in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 170-198: pp. 176-178.

[22] If, as Amy Charles has suggested, the title was added posthumously by Herbert's first readers at Little Gidding (Charles, 185), it can be regarded as a first indication of the popularity of Herbert's verse, possibly referring to its divine status of invoking a sacred space, and exploring the individual soul as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Connotations of the title may include the Old Testament Temple of Solomon; in the New Testament, the Temple can signify Christ, the Christian Church, and (the body of) the individual believer (Cf. Wilcox 2007, 39-40).

[23] In Patrides, 61. Original source: Bodleian MS Eng. poet. f. 16, fol. 11. For comparable expressions, see also the first two Lines of Christopher Harvey's "A Stepping-stone to the treshold of Mr. Herberts Church-porch" from his sequence "The Synagogue": "What Church is this? Christs Church. Who builds it? / Mr. *George Herbert*" (Patrides, 63-64); or Robert Codrington's "On Herbert's Poems" (1638): "View a true Poet, whose bare lines / Include more goodnesse then some shrines." (ll. 1-2, in Patrides 63))

This poem, presumably written as an elegy shortly after Herbert's death, ambiguously addresses God and Herbert: both are 'Sacred Architects', involved in the construction of *The Temple*. Although Polwhele seems to speak to Herbert in the first line of his poem, he cannot help but implicate God in the process. Herbert's poetic creations cannot stand on their own: they find their place and function in relation to the Bible and God's creation. Referring to a similar principle, Barbara Lewalski has categorised *The Church*, the central section of *The Temple* as a "New Covenant psalter, the song-book of the new temple in the heart;"[24] Herbert's poems build on the readers' familiarity with Scripture. Polwhele's dedicatory lines indicate that Herbert's Temple is a distinct space in which God's creation is mediated. The echoing – a metaphor pointing out that we are dealing with an imagined, yet realistic physical space – of 'his praise', that is Herbert praising God, takes place in a joint devotional space, in itself a sound 'echo' or reflection of God's creation. Echoing the praise of God, Herbert's voice makes itself heard during the reading process, as it is reconstructed by readers meeting the poet in his Temple. That this echo can be heard frequently ('stil') depends on this poetry being read continually. Keeping this reading process alive and active establishes the position of Herbert's verse as an intermediary structure between Heaven and earth, between God and the readers of *The Temple*.

God's creation of the poetic space of *The Temple*, mediated by Herbert's craftsmanship, finds its archetypical precedent in the Biblical conception of the human body, as a frame created by God in which man is destined to echo a divine design. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 St. Paul asks: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" In a similar fashion, Herbert aspired to create a body of verse which was 'not [his] own'; his poetry (his own creation) is an extension of his body (God's creation), and, by analogy, of the world, as indicated in the Dedication. In his verse, Herbert thus unites physical and spiritual experience: the two are inseparable. To illustrate this, Terry Sherwood has indicated that "Herbert leads the reader to see that building the human temple spiritually requires our sense of physical space in which objects are made to fit."[25] In his poetic rendering of these matters, Polwhele imitates Herbert's *Temple* in several ways. He employs the lyric form; his poem is devotional, directed to God *and* to Herbert, whereas the physical act of imitative writing, the application of his own craftsmanship in response to his reading of Herbert's verse, allows Polwhele to identify with Herbert in his role as a poet.

While reading *The Temple*, readers can meet and interact with Herbert; this process requires an active participation of the reader, who should construct, or re-erect, the verse, ensuring its existence. Acknowledging this task of Herbert's readers, Thomas Forde, in his '[Lines] with

[24] Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics in the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979): p. 246.

[25] Terry Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989): p. 77. Reconstructing Herbert's construction process, Sherwood refers specifically to the hieroglyphic form of some poems in *The Church*.

Herberts Poeme' (1660), puts it so strongly as to make the reader the creator of *The Temple*, for as long as the reading process lasts.

> The *Poet*'s now become a *Priest*, and layes
> His Poem at your feet, expects no *Bayes*
> But your *acceptance*; *kind'le* it with your eyes,
> (…)
> Visit this Temple, at your vacant houres,
> Twas Herberts Poem once, but now its Yours. (ll. 1-3 and 11-12)[26]

There are no obstacles ('bayes') for *The Temple* to assume its proper function, unless it is not accepted and attended to by its readers. This attendance consists of 'kindling', igniting the potential of Herbert's verse by perceiving and processing it. Offering his poetry, Herbert assumes his role as a priest, employing his poems, which he trusted to be read, in the performance of his tasks. When involving themselves with his poems Herbert's readers are required to *act*; *The Temple* is not a devotional object, to be consumed passively. Forde's poem makes clear that Herbert offers something that is unfinished, a poetic potential rather that a finished product: it has to be made the reader's own, if it is to perform its function. 'Kindling' and visiting *The Temple*, Herbert's readers realise this poetic potential. While reading, then, readers must actually identify with the roles of three distinct creators: God, Herbert, and themselves. While reading, the reader's identity is temporarily determined by identifying with Herbert's poetic craft: 'Twas Herberts Poem once, but now its Yours.'

A similar required activity of the reader underlies Herbert's employment of the Bible. Two of his poems in 'The Church' are explicitly dedicated to the experience of reading Scripture.[27] From these, we can deduce that Herbert strove to accomplish a personal involvement with the Bible. This was necessary to experience a union with God, or rather a dissolving of the boundaries between his own 'self' and God, a process poignantly invoked in his passionate plea in 'Clasping of

[26] In Patrides 87-8. Original source: Forde, 'Fragmenta Poetica: or, Poetical Diversions' (1660), pp. 17-18. See also Richard Crashaw's "On Mr G. Herberts booke intituled the Temple of Sacred Poems, sent to a Gentlewoman" (before 1646) which seems to express a similar idea:

> Know you faire, on what you looke;
> Divinest love lyes in this booke:
> Expecting fire from your eyes,
> To kindle this his sacrifice
> When your hands unty these strings,
> Thinke you have an Angell by th' wings.
> (…)
> And though Herberts name doe owe
> These devotions, fairest; know
> That while I lay them on the shrine
> Of your white hand, *they are mine*. (ll. 1-6, 15-18; Patrides 67. Italics my own).

[27] Cf. 'The H. Scriptures I' and '– II' (207, 210).

Hands', which ends with these exclamations: "O be mine still! still make me thine! / Or rather make no Mine and Thine!" (540, 19-20).[28] The process of making a text's one's own was thus central to Herbert's own experience of reading the Bible; it ensured that the Bible and God were temporarily incorporated. Herbert envisioned a similar personal experience for each reading of *The Temple*, in which, as John Savoie has demonstrated, Scripture is translated to individual experience.[29] The union between poet and reader, or rather, the dissolving of the boundaries between poet and reader, ensures that the reader can enact, or temporarily *become*, Herbert's exemplary Christian personae, re-enacting the dynamics of the Christian life by recreating his verse.

Herbert's poems thus provided a meeting place in which the reader could temporarily re-live the poet's exemplary life. Within these parameters we can discern the purpose that he reputedly intended his poems to have. By establishing and maintaining *The Temple*, Herbert's readers could be favourably affected in the purification of their souls; a process enabled by the active engagement with his exemplary roles. In Izaak Walton's account of Herbert and his verse, here taken in its rudimentary form from *The Life of Dr. John Donne,* we find the characteristics of this process clearly expressed, when Walton comes to mention Herbert in his hagiography of Donne:

> I mean that *George Herbert*, who was the author of the *Temple*, or *Sacred Poems and Ejaculations*. A Book, in which by declaring his own spiritual conflicts, he hath comforted and raised many a dejected and discomposed Soul, and charmed them into sweet and quiet thoughts: A Book by the frequent reading whereof, and the assistance of the Spirit that seemed to inspire the Author, the Reader may attain habits of *Peace* and *Piety*, and all the gifts of the *Holy Ghost* and *Heaven*: and may by still reading, still keep those sacred fires burning upon the Altar of so pure a heart, as shall free it from the anxieties of this world, and keep it fixt upon things that are above.[30]

Walton's account confirms Herbert's exemplary and intermediary position. Herbert offers his struggling poetic personae to comfort and strengthen his readers. Thus, his verse can be unsettling and healing, instable and harmonious, at the same time. In the poetic space that can be entered by readers to follow his example, he '[declares] his own spiritual conflicts' in a manner that allows the readers to act; first in establishing the poetic union between themselves and the author, and as a consequence in living their lives freed 'from the anxieties of this world'. By means of his verse Herbert ensures that his readers are 'charmed into sweet and quiet thoughts' by confronting

[28] The requirement to erase the distinctions between the 'self' and God resurfaces in Herbert's poetics, which centres around resolving the making of distinctions *as such*. Cf. Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Cemtury Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1972): pp. 173-89.

[29] Savoie, "The Word Within: Predicating the Presence of God in George Herbert's *The Temple*", in the *George Herbert Journal* 23.1/2 (1999/2000): pp. 55-79.

[30] Walton, 223.

them with spiritual conflicts that they have to make their own; re-living his exemplary struggles offers the opportunity for his readers to strengthen their devotion to God. The 'frequent reading' of *The Temple* should ensure that the spiritual conflicts that it contains are employed time and again; they are to be made a regular part of one's religious behaviour, ultimately for the benefit of one's relation with God.

A clear example of a *Temple*-poem in which such an exemplary struggle is enacted is 'Deniall', which combines the persona's incapacity to communicate with God with disharmony in the end-rhyme of each stanza. This disharmony is resolved in the final stanza, when the persona's body is restored to order, communication with God is restored, and the rhyme-scheme is 'mended'.[31]

When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent ears,
Then was my heart broken, as was my verse;
My breast was full of fears
And disorder. (1-5)

(…)

Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
Untuned, unstrung:
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipped blossom, hung
Discontented.

O cheer and tune my heartless breast,
Defer no time;
That so thy favors granting my request,
They and my mind may chime,
And mend my rhyme. (287, 21-30)

The body of the devotee (the 'heart') and his verse are connected by means of a musical metaphor; both body and verse are 'untuned', in disorder, until the restoration of rhyme, and 'chiming', the reconciliation with God, in the final stanza, which allows the persona to be reinstated in God's music or order.[32] In analogy to the process depicted in 'Deniall', being in harmony with the poet can result in a 'cheering' and 'tuning' of the soul. As long as one's ears are 'silent', not in tune with the senses of the one whom one is trying to unite oneself with, the reader cannot hear, or process, the poetic voice, and experience the intended effect. The reading process entails the individual interaction between poet and reader, and thus also, by extension, between God and

[31] Cf. John Hollander, *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975): p. 131.
[32] Cf. Summers, 136.

the reader. The interaction between God and the persona is broken and restored in an endless pattern of order and disorder. We can assume that, by analogy, the relationship between the poet and the reader unfolds in similar patterns. The experience of harmony that so many readers make mention of, then, while reading *The Temple* is not purely aesthetic; it is not only the result of the apparent beauty, the technical perfection, of the poems. Instead, the identification with the persona, struggling to 'chime' with God, while also positioning oneself as creator of *The Temple*, surveying and controlling this process, ensures that one can better 'tune' oneself to God: a healing process enacted in 'Deniall'.

Herbert's reading and application of the Bible was aimed at a similar healing effect, a quest for harmony, as explored in 'The H. Scriptures I', one of the lyrics in 'The Church':

> Oh Book! infinite sweetnesse! let my heart
> Suck ev'ry letter, and a hony gain,
> Precious for any grief in any part;
> To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain. (207, 1-4)

As Herbert indicates here, the 'sweetnesse' of the Bible can be experienced and put to use by physically connecting with its language – the same physical and spiritual union that Herbert envisioned to occur in *The Temple* between its personae and its readers.[33] The healing power assigned to God is thus extended to his Word; reading the Bible can result in 'being heard' by God. This, in turn, can effectuate the process of 'tuning oneself' to God: the heart, and by metonymy re the body and the soul are temporarily embedded in God's presence, thus compensating for the 'pain' and 'grief' of life. *The Temple* was to be both a reflection on, and an integral part of, readers' daily experiences: the'lines' should accord with'life' ('The Collar', 524, 4).

*2.4 'Spelling', reading and writing, life: the dynamics of Christian experience*

The pastor / poet purified his readers in a world gone astray. Richard Todd has noted that the "figurative perversity" or "baffling ambiguity" of Herbert's poems duplicates the fallible nature of the world, as perceived in Herbert's time.[34] According to Herbert, combining divine perfection and natural decay, the world develops through harmony and struggle, or, as Herbert puts it in *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie*, as the outcome of "the power of order and disorder."[35] This principle informs Herbert's pastoral writing and thinking: it also shapes his poetry, for instance in the short poem 'Bitter-Sweet', included in *The Temple*:

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[33] For the significance of things 'sweet' in Herbert's *Temple*, see Wilcox 2007, xliv-xlv.

[34] Richard Todd, *The Opacity of Signs. Acts of Interpretation in George Herbert's 'The Temple'* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986): pp. 54, 167. Todd bases his reading of Herbert on an Augustinian theory of signification, which, starting from the fallible nature of mankind, proposes that nature and God cannot be perfectly known; due to its fallen state, mankind cannot read the signs of Scripture and Nature to perfection.

[35] In Hutchinson, p. 297.

> Ah my deare angrie Lord,
> Since thou dost love, yet strike;
> Cast down, yet help afford;
> Sure I wille do the like.
>
> I will complain, yet praise;
> I will bewail, approve:
> And all my soure-sweet dayes
> I will lament, and love. (587)

The dynamics of life with all its 'soure-sweet dayes' are thus explained by the actions, or rather the mood, of Herbert's God, who is both 'deare' and 'angrie'. The persona expresses the desire to model his mood and his actions on the outcomes of the divine will, under the influence of which time and the world unfold. This desire is enacted in the poem itself. Every line depicts the dynamics from order to disorder, from 'deare' to 'angrie', from 'love' to 'strike', down to 'lament' and 'love': a process characteristic for *The Temple* as whole.[36] The rhyme-scheme is regular, while the language is quiet, suggesting a submission to God's will while the poem unfolds. Christ sets the standard; Christians are to follow and accept it. Quietness can be achieved by submitting oneself to the divine pattern of order and disorder.

Quiet acceptance of whatever God has in store is the ideal behaviour for Herbert's personae and readers, yet most of the poems in *The Temple* suggest that this ideal is impossible to attain (the bitter tone of 'Bitter-Sweet' can attest to this). Herbert's personae spend a lot of time being angry, frustrated, afraid, and in doubt of God's good intentions: the initial protestation in 'The Collar', "I struck the board [the communion table], and cry'd, No more. / I will abroad (526, 1-2)," is exemplary for this constantly recurring conflict between man's and God's will. In his prose treatise *A Priest to the Temple* Herbert conceptualises this conflict in Christian terms:

> The Countrey Parson knows, that there is a double state of a Christian even in this Life, the one military, the other peacable. The military is, when we are assaulted with temptations either from within or from without. The peacable is, when the Divell for a time, leaves us, as he did our Saviour, and the Angels minister to us their owne food, even joy, and peace; and comfort in the Holy Ghost. (280)

The dynamics of life, then, arise from its being lived between the order of Heaven and the disorder inherent in the fallen nature of mankind. The Christian life consists of a constant battle to overcome the devil's influence, resulting in the committing of sins, and a constant joy in the knowledge that Christ has redeemed all future sins by offering his life. In 'The Church Porch', the opening segment of *The Temple*, Herbert states of sin that "It blots thy lesson written in thy

[36] Cf. Bloch, p. 261.

soul; / The holy lines cannot be understood (50, 9-10)." Sin works against the union between the soul and the words of the Bible. When working to the advantage of readers' souls, *The Temple* restores the union between these souls and the Bible, temporarily overcoming the temptations of the world.

Herbert's account of the dynamics of life suggests that parts of its battles are fought out within the confines of the human body. The body bears its own principle of divine, yet dynamic, order: the soul, a God-given essence in constant conflict with the turmoil and temptations from without and from within. In the soul human life and the sacred Word come together, being 'the essential determinant principle' for early modern human beings, as is clear in the first definition provided in the *OED*: "The principle of life in man or animals; animate existence [obsolete after the seventeenth century]." In this conception of the soul, the ability to employ one's mental powers, and make sense of the world in terms of the Christian narrative (the ability to order experience by interpreting it) is an integral part of the soul, a God-given faculty, itself.[37] Tracing the Christian tradition of connecting the mind to the soul, Michael MacDonald, has asserted that from the Middle Ages onwards, theologians and scientists had described the function of the mind as re-establishing the order of the soul, by relating it properly to the Christian order of the universe.[38] In this vein we may better understand the implication of Herbert's desired function of his poems, which could 'turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul.' His readers were to apply their mental faculties while reading *The Temple*, in order to reconcile their souls with the Christian order of the world.

Herbert conceptualised this Christian order as *form*;[39] in order to attain health, souls were to be accorded with forms. This conception evidently informed George Daniel's lyric "An Ode upon the Incomparable Liricke Poesie written by Mr George Herbert; entituled: '*The Temple*'" (1648):

> LORD! yet how dull am I?
> When I would flye!
> Up to the Region, of thy Glories where
> Onlie true forms appeare;

[37] See also OED 3b of *soul*: "Intellectual or spiritual power; high development of the mental faculties." For the historical and etymological origins of the word, see John M. Rist, "Platonic Soul, Aristotelian Form, Christian Person", in *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience*, eds. A.I. Baumgarten, J. Assman, G.G. Stroumsa (1998), pp. 347-62. For the relation between soul and mind, see also Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966) for an historical overview, and Semir Zeki, *Inner Vision: an Exploration of Art and the Brain* (Oxford: OUP, 1999) for a modern neurobiological perspective.

[38] Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), p. 178.

[39] The *OED* 7 definition of *form*, "A model, type, pattern, or example" (Obsolete after the 17th Century) indicates that readers could conceive of Herbert's poetic re-enactment of life as a perfected, divine form in itself. See also Nicholas Ferrer's Preface to the first edition of *The Temple* (1633), in which he describes Herbert's role in the perspective of divinity: "As God had enabled him, so he accounted him meet not onely to be called but to be compelled to his service: Wherein his faithful discharge was such, as may make him justly a companion to the primitive Saints, *and a pattern or more for the age he lived in*." (In Patrides 59, italics my own).

(…)
This Glorious Larke; with humble Honour, I
Admire and praise
But when I raise
My Selfe, I fall asham'd, to see him flye. (ll. 1-4 and 13-16)[40]

In this lyric, the realm of 'true forms' is represented as one of divine perfection. A characteristic of true forms is the experience of (divine) harmonious structure;[41] for Daniel, reading *The Temple* entails both the experience of these true forms, and the frustration of not being able to match them, '[falling] asham'd to see him [Herbert] flye'. In turn, Herbert's verse describes the inability of the poetic personae to meet God's expectations. Daniel's persona, then, fails twice, both in matching God and Herbert. This failure, however, can be overcome. Herbert's poetic language helps the reader temporarily to harmonise the soul with the divine forms that shape the world.

These forms are primarily conceptual; The Bible, God's Word, forms the basis of Herbert's thinking on human life. Chana Bloch has clarified that the Bible provides the constellation in which Herbert thinks and makes sense of his life. In his poetry, he makes the language of Scripture his own by creatively combining phrases, words and allusions, to match his experience of sin and redemption.[42] In his poems, then, he imagines and crafts a new set of experiences, a new 'constellation' ('The H. Scriptures' 210, 4), for himself and his readers. Herbert's constellation follows a similar pattern as the Biblical one, as Bloch makes clear: they fit into each other, to be used simultaneously and similarly by readers:

> Herbert is imaginatively drawn to the nodal point of history as it is recorded in Scripture, the juncture between Old and New, precisely because he encounters it time and again in his own experience. He finds in biblical history the paradigm of his spiritual struggles, his movement towards God and his miserable backsliding.[43]

Herbert interprets his own experience in light of the Bible; in effect, he reads his own experiences as parts, or extensions, of Biblical stories. Harold Toliver, in *George Herbert's Christian Narrative* (1993),[44] asserts that the framework that Herbert employs is shaped like a story, which is constantly present in its entirety in the lives of Christians seeking to live in harmony with God: "[V]irtually the entire mythos from Adam to doomsday becomes extraordinarily vivid in his mind's eye and a torment to the spirit engaged in the conflicts that arise from trying to reconcile

[40] In Patrides, 70-71. Original source: British Library Add. MS 192555.
[41] Cf. *OED* 1e. of *form* "Beauty, comeliness" (*Obs.* – 17th Cent.). The association of beauty with God goes back to Augustine's *Confessions*, depicting God as "Beauty of all things beautiful," in *Confessions*, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Father*, First Series vol.1 (repr. Grand Rapids, 1983), III.6.
[42] Cf. Bloch, 'The Rhetoric of Allusion', 46-112.
[43] Bloch, 116.
[44] Toliver, *George Herbert's Christian Narrative* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

social and natural life within it" (4).[45] Herbert thus made himself and his readers into elements of the narratives of the Bible, including the lives of his personae, and of the readers identifying with (or re-creating) those personae, in biblical typology.[46]

The 'reconciliation' enacted in Herbert's poems, then, is one between an underlying Christian narrative and reality as it presents itself from day to day: Herbert's personae reconcile life-experience with the narratives of the Bible. Herbert seems to refer to this process in the following lines from 'The bunch of grapes':

> For as the Jews of Old by Gods command
> Travell'd, and saw no town;
> So now each Christian hath his journey spann'd:
> Their story pennes and sets us down. (449, 8-11)

Herbert thus connects the lives of himself and those in his community to the lives narrated in the Bible – the archetypes of which can be found in the lives of Abraham and Moses, who lead their people from captivity to new, promised lands under God's guidance. As indicated in this short passage, Herbert felt that the stories of the Bible were to re-make readers in the image of the archetypical Christian protagonists. This re-making forms the basis of his poetic conflicts, which are both his own and shared (for pre-lived and to be re-lived), private and communal; on this topic, Bloch has remarked that "[w]hat we find at the heart of Herbert's poetry is (…) the image of the believer confronting, assimilating, and speaking the Word of God in his human and fallible existence."[47] By employing the words of the Bible as Herbert does in *The Temple*, Christians can order their lives by placing themselves in the larger narrative of God's chosen people; the mediation of this creation of order through the narratives of the Bible seems to be central to Herbert's pastoral and poetic function in the Christian community.

To Herbert, religious practice should aid one in uniting the Bible with life. In Walton's *Life of Mr George Herbert*, we find an account of Herbert, freshly arrived in Bemerton, explaining to his congregation the role of religion in the reconciliation of the Christian narrative to ordinary life, by means of the calendar of the Anglican Church, the church that he served as a parson.

> He instructed them also, what benefit they had, by the Churches appointing the Celebration of Holy-dayes, and the excellent use of them; namely, that they were set apart for particular commemorations of particular mercies received from Almighty God; and (…) to be the *Landmark* to distinguish times, for by them we are taught to take notice how time passes by us; (…) [here follow the most important

[45] For a concise account of the Christian narrative in Herbert's own words, cf. *A Priest to the Temple*, "The Authour's Prayer before Sermon," 288-9.
[46] Cf. A. E. Watkins, "Typology and the Self in George Herbert's 'Affliction' Poems," in *George Herbert Journal* 31.1/2 (2007/2008): pp. 63-82, and also Lewalski, 283-316 and Tuve, 112-37.
[47] Bloch, 45.

> holy days on the Church calendar] Thus the Church keeps an Historical and circular Commemoration of times, as they pass by us; of such times, as ought to incline us to occasional praises, for the particular blessings which we do, or might receive by those holy Commemorations.[48]

The temporal organisation of the church, the rhythm that it dictates, mediates between Heaven and the world, ultimately serving the purpose of incorporating God's Word in one's life. This imposition of order on the passing of time, and Christians' adherence to it, enables a temporary reconciliation with God. By controlling the measure of his verse, and naming its main exemplary section 'The Church', Herbert envisioned a similar intermediary, instrumental role for his own verse, which represents an extension of the Christian narrative, providing the reader with a life-like mixture of order and randomness. By means of religion, with *The Temple* as a specific component of that religion, Herbert's readers can reconcile individual experience with the larger narrative of which they are a part, led by the measured and mediating example that is offered by Herbert. Herbert's verse teaches his community "how Gods goodnesse strives with mans refractorinesse; Man would sit down at this world, God bids him sell it, and purchase a better."[49] By incorporating the church, and *The Temple*, in one's life one could aspire to unite God's goodness with the conflicts of experience.

*2.5 Herbert's language*

The language of *The Temple* can be characterised by its restraint and simplicity. Aiming to mediate, rather than emulate, divine creativity, Herbert had a clear preference for plain and simple forms, in contrast to the kind of poetic display that betrays artificiality and human vanity;[50] his aim was to speak 'plainly' in the words of the Bible (cf. 'Jordan', 200, 15).[51] Plainness, in this sense, allows words to be 'sweet';[52] restraint in one's use of language leaves room for the words of the Bible to be heard. Herbert's preference for (self-) restraint is echoed in the first, relatively plain publication of *The Temple*. Herbert dedicated his poems to God, setting the stage for the depiction of a private relationship, which left no room for the social gestures that would normally accompany the publication of poetry.[53] In the preface to the first edition of *The Temple*,

[48] Walton, 404-5.

[49] *Priest*, in Hutchinson, 272.

[50] See Wilcox 1996; Anne Marie Miller Blaise, "Sweetnesse readie penn'd. Herbert's Theology of Beauty" (*George Herbert Journal* 27.1&2, 2003-4): pp. 1-21, and Elizabeth Clarke, *Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry: 'Divinitie, and Poesie, Met'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): pp. 27-70.

[51] For Herbert's own remarks on the authority of the Bible, cf. *Briefe Notes on Valdesso's* Considerations. On the topic of Herbert's plain style, cf. Leah Marcus, "George Herbert and the Anglican Plain Style," in *"Too Rich to Clothe the Sun": Essays on George Herbert*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980): pp. 179-93. For an account of ways in which the Biblical lyric, apart from the Psalms to be found in Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, set generic conventions for the early modern religions lyric, cf. Lewalski, 31-71.

[52] Cf. Terry G. Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989): pp. 57-76.

[53] These 'social gestures' usually include dedicatory poems or letters preceding the actual work to

'The Printers to the Reader', presumably written by Nicholas Ferrar, the reader is reminded of the ideals with which *The Temple* was supposed to be approached: "The world (…) shall receive it [The Temple] in that naked simplicitie, with which he [Herbert] left it, without any addition either of support or ornament, more than is included in it self. We leave it free and unforstalled to every mans judgement, and to the benefit that he shall finde by perusal."[54] This presentation of *The Temple* allows readers to focus entirely on using and benefiting from it, reading it to their 'advantage', not distracted by any unnecessary, ungodly, additions.

On closer inspection, Herbert's poems prove to be amalgams of Biblical names and phrases.[55] Joseph Summers has shown that Herbert made use of extraordinarily few borrowings from earlier writers, making his verse accessible to a large audience, which would have been acquainted with the contents of the Bible and the 'outward forms' propagated by the Anglican church, the two main sources for the contents of *The Temple*.[56] In its preface, Ferrar remarks that "Next God, he [Herbert] loved that which God himself hath magnified above all things, that is, his Word:"[57] Herbert attempted to incorporate God's Word in every aspect of his (exemplary) life; he sought to integrate Christ in the lives of his readers, by mediating His presence in one's daily behaviour: while reading *The Temple*, "Christ is discovered to be not only the substance of all things, but the performer of all actions."[58] The typology of the Christian narrative was not only to be understood, it was to be applied and recreated. By re-creating the Bible in his own image, Herbert attempted to re-make himself, and his readers.[59] In *Briefe Notes*, he stresses that the use of the Bible lies in its power to transform its readers: "holy Scriptures have not only an Elementary use, but a use of perfection, and are able to make the man of God perfect, *2 Tim. 3*" (306). By having his personae relive, and being transformed by, God's Word in *The Temple*, he aspired to mediate these processes of transformation for his readers.

To achieve this, the personae of *The Temple* should embody God's Word. John Reynolds, commenting in verse on *The Temple* in 1725, remarks on this process:

> Strange! how each fellow saint's surpris'd
> To see himself anatomiz'd!
> The *Sion's* mourner breathes thy strains,
> Sighs thee, & in thy notes complains;
> Amaz'd, & yet refresh'd to see
> His wounds, drawn to the life in thee![60]

acknowledge patronage. Cf. Zwicker 2002.

[54] In Wilcox 2007, 41-2.

[55] Cf. Lewalski, Bloch, Wilcox 1996. For related practices close to Herbert's active engagement with the Bible, cf. Dyck 2003/4.

[56] Summers, 29-48.

[57] In Wilcox 2007, p. 42.

[58] Fish 1972, 173.

[59] See, for instance, Robert Kilgore, "Rereading Ourselves in 'Redemption'", in *George Herbert Journal* 26.1/2 (2002/2003): pp. 1-14.

[60] In Patrides, p. 160. ll. 13-18. Original source: Reynolds, 'A View of Death' (1725).

In his dedicatory lines Reynolds "shows in detail how *The Temple* could be read as every Christian's autobiography."[61] Herbert's poetry achieves this as it 'anatomises' (literally re-members) Christian behaviour of the past, allowing readers to re-live this behaviour. God's Word is constantly 'refreshed' by keeping it close to (corporeal) experience and away from extravagant verbal artifice. Employing language to re-live the dynamics of (Christian) experience can thus ensure that one's language is kept 'sweet' and clean; Herbert's language was to be kept close to the body – God's creation – and away from the mind – the fount of human creativity.

Language itself, then, is part of the problems that need to be resolved in *The Temple*; the spiritual conflicts, or transformations, of *The Temple* derive partly from Herbert's problematic attitude towards language. One's devotion to God was to be expressed by means of human language, while grace could only be attained through the Word, the language of Scripture, the kind of language that could only be received.[62] Referring to this principle, William Shullenberger has indicated the difficulties that Herbert was facing as a devotional poet: "the problem for Herbert as plain speaker is not the often-discussed problem of poetic artifice, but the problem of how to use language at all without betraying himself or his audience."[63] Herbert's plain style can be understood as an attempt to subdue his poetic voice as much as he could, making room for the language of the Bible to be received in due time. This tension between the language of the Bible and the imperfect human application of language – the unbridgeable gap between human language and the Word –[64] the extension or prefiguration of the problematic relation between man and God, is the topic of many poems in *The Temple*, and also of a short stanza in 'The Quip':

> Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
> And he would needs a comfort be,
> And, to be short, make an Oration.
> *But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.* (395, 17-20)

Following to these lines, human language cannot be of true comfort; it does not have the capacity to heal and transform. To demonstrate the dynamics of human and divine language, and their problematic relationship, Herbert paraphrases Psalm 38:15 in the final line of this stanza.[65] The first three lines are not from the Bible, thus enacting 'quick Wit and Conversation.' The final line resonates with Scripture, both stating and enacting the ultimate dependence on God's Word. This

[61] Summers, 17.
[62] Cf. Fish 1972, 158-89.
[63] Shullenberger, "*Ars Praedicandi* in George Herbert's Poetry", in *"Bright Shoots of Everlastingnesse"; The Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Missouri: Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1987): pp. 96-7.
[64] Cf. Fish 1972, 156-8.
[65] Cf. Wilcox 2007, p. 394. Psalm 38:15 reads "For in thee, o Lord, have I put my trust: thou shalt answer Lord, for me" Quoted from *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book*. Ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1976), the version of the Psalms that was probably most familiar to Herbert through the Anglican liturgy (Wilcox 2007, p. xxvii).

toned down use of language, kept short and well-versed so that it could be taken over by God at any given moment, epitomized in the simplicity of the biblical refrain,[66] is characteristic of Herbert's poetry.

If Herbert shaped his poetry after the Bible, the Psalms, with their lyrical structures and depictions of private relationships between personae and God, come closest to *The Temple* in their contents and form. As Lewalski has reminded us, the Psalms were considered as the epitome of the entire scriptures, the compendium of all theological doctrine; moreover, the lyric form of the Psalms ensured that the wisdom of the divine Word became verbal music, constructed in superb metre, a metrical structure that could serve as a pattern for practising poets.[67] Considered a modern psalmist in his own time, Herbert aspired to a divine musical order in his poetry; music was his "sweetest of sweets" ('Church musick', 239, 1). This musical quality of his verse has been widely accepted in its reception.[68] In Herbert's thinking, music can represent the divine order, to which one can tune one's soul. In 'A true Hymne' (the title alludes to the true forms of Heaven, to be found in the music of the liturgy) Herbert expresses this idea: "The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords, / Is, when the soul unto the lines accords" (576, 9-10). Effectuating this 'accord' is the aim of Herbert's poetic and pastoral work.

Herbert's verse itself is 'bitter-sweet' in that it unites perfection and fallibility. The perfected poetic structures of *The Temple*, its 'true forms', coincide with the suspicious matter that these structures contain: language.[69] Shullenberger unites this quality of Herbert's language with the two directions in which Herbert speaks: "If the direction of speech toward God is charged by devotion, the direction of the speech toward its human auditors carries the burden of persuasion. Paradoxically, 'Holiness' in this remarkable prose mixture of the sublime and the practical takes its place as a *strategy* in the context of effective persuasion."[70] In other words, Herbert cannot do without the moving effects of language, directing his poems partly to human readers. By framing language in tight, musical structures, Herbert can merge 'the sublime and the practical' in *The Temple*.

### *2.6 Reading* The Temple: *Connecting the body to the Word*

Aiming to keep his language 'sweet' and 'clean', Herbert targeted the bodies of his readers, God's created frames, the temporary temples in which the holy spirit could be received (cf. 1.3). Herbert's poetic persuasions were aimed at these created, corrupted frames; he sought to transform the bodies of his readers, to make them fit for God. In a contemporary response that

66 Cf. Arnold Stein, *George Herbert's Lyrics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968): p. 148.
67 Lewalski, 41-3.
68 Cf. Helen Wilcox, "'The Sweet Singer of the Temple': the Musicians' Response to Herbert," in *George Herbert Journal* 10 (1986/7): pp. 47-60.
69 For the mistrust of poetic language during and shortly after the Reformation, cf. Clarke 1997, 1-5.
70 Shullenberger, 99.

alludes to this effect, Henry Vaughan, ardent and successful follower of Herbert, addresses him directly, opening his poem 'The Match' as follows:

> Dear Friend! whose holy ever-living lines
> Have done much good
> To many, and have checkt my blood,
> My fierce, wild blood that still heaves, and inclines,
> But is still tam'd
> By these bright fires which thee inflam'd;
> Here I joyn hands, and thrust my stubborn heart
> Into thy Deed. (1-8)[71]

Vaughan conceives of Herbert's poetry as deeds or activities in which he can join by the act of reading, thus allowing himself to be re-made while reading *The Temple*. The transformations of his body are achieved by joining it to Herbert's: reading *The Temple* requires the sharing of hands and hearts. The result of this temporary junction is that one's blood is 'tam'd' or 'checkt', or *controlled* by means of *The Temple*. This control was to be achieved by re-living the 'bright fires' that once inflam'd Herbert, represented in the encounters between his personae and God. Vaughan presumes to speak for 'many': the recurrent taming of the body by joining in the poetic struggles ensures that Herbert's verse consists of 'holy ever-living lines'.

Herbert thus sought to persuade his readers into taming their bodies. This process of taming or *tempering* could serve to ground man's reconciliation with God, as "[it] was through the body and the senses that paradise was lost – seeing, touching, tasting, eating the apple. And so, it is through the regenerate body and the regenerate senses that it must be regained – seeing, touching, tasting, eating Christ's body".[72] The Christian narrative is connected to the dynamics of the body, firstly moved by the eating of the forbidden fruit in Eden, and redeemed by a corporeal union with Christ through Holy Communion. Acknowledging this corporeal basis of Christian typology, Herbert was not concerned with the catechism as a root learning of doctrine; to him, doctrine could not be separated from (the bodies of) those who were using it.[73] Rather than imposing information on his community, "the Catechizer, if he once get the skill of it, will draw out of ignorant and silly souls, even the dark and deep point of religion" (*Priest*, 256). To Herbert, religion was not valuable when only stored in books.[74] Sacred texts should be connected to the

[71] In *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, ed. Alan Rudrum (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975): p. 191.

[72] C.J. Walby, "'Quick-ey'd Love': Regenerate Eyes and Spiritual Body in Herbert's "Love (III)". *George Herbert Journal* 21 1/2 (1997/1998), 58-72: p. 67.

[73] Fish 1978, 11-25. This was the standard view on catechising. Fish cites Lancelot Andrewes' *A Patterne of catechisticall doctrine* (1630): "The duty of the catechized [is] to goe over the same matter, as the knife doth the whetstone, and to repeat it till they have made it their owne" (qtd. on p. 18).

[74] Inseparable from, and clearly concerned with, the fierce doctrinal religious debates of his own time, as can be deduced from his commentary on Valdesso's 'Considerations', Herbert's main concerns as a priest and poet seem not have been of religious doctrine, or, to be more precise, he located doctrine not in books but in human

living souls of Christians; moving these souls in the right direction is Herbert's way of achieving true knowledge about God.

In this sense, religion could become a kind of self-discovery; Herbert's readers were asked to find out how they could join the Bible with their private lives. This self-discovery was to be a private process; its outcome could differ from one person to the next. The parson's task is to survey this process. Herbert extended his teaching method to a similarly active attitude to the proceedings in church, as becomes evident when we consider the following excerpt from 'The Parson Praying', Chapter VI in *Priest*:

> This is that which the Apostle cals a reasonable service, *Rom.*12. when we speak not as Parrats, without reason, or offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoyd of reason; but when we use our reason and apply our powers to the service of him, that gives them. (232)

It is important, then, that in every aspect of the religious life, one acts, thinks, and prays without losing track of one's own private relationship to these activities. According to Herbert's readers, the personae at work in *The Temple* employ a similar self-reflective mode of experiencing the Bible. Chana Bloch has remarked that Herbert's *Temple* portrays a Christian at work who makes the words of the Bible his own. What these poems present is not "a plain and evident declaration of the meaning of the [Biblical] text, but rather the believer in the act of embracing it."[75] Herbert's poems represent individual believers who attain self-knowledge by living life in light of the Bible; the poetic persona, reconstructed in the process of reading the poems, *is* the doctrine of *The Temple*. Similar to his catechistical strategies, "[the] lesson that Herbert teaches is never abstract but is always embodied in the matrix of a specific emotional experience."[76] His readers were to perform similar processes of self-discovery; Herbert's pastoral and poetic aim was to control these processes.

It seems sensible to adopt a similar Herbertian attitude towards *The Temple* if we want to understand for what purposes it was written, and what effects it had on his readers. As Wilcox has argued, to Herbert "[r]eading is a mutual revelation, dependent upon the text and its 'secrets' but also on the reader, whose 'life' itself 'comments' on the book being read. Herbert's *The Temple*

life. Herbert's early poem 'The H. Communion', only included in the Williams manuscript of *The Temple*, can serve to illustrate "[his] disregard for theological quibbling." (Savoie, 58) In this poem, Herbert concerns himself with the notion of transubstantiation, a central point of difference between Catholic and Protestant doctrines: "ffirst I am sure, whether bread stay / Or whether Bread doe fly away / Concerneth bread not mee" (ll. 7-9) (In Wilcox 2007, 7). A similar dismissal of theological debates is expressed in 'Divinitie' (468). Herbert's prime interest in bread is not its meaning, its status; he is concerned with what bread can do for those consuming it. The bread is instrumental, not an issue in itself, only significant when incorporated in the community.

[75] Bloch, 32.

[76] Bloch, 289.

is therefore built on a principle of reading which is active, mutual and transformative."[77] This means that, in order to understand the intended reading processes of *The Temple*, we should reconstruct Herbert's views on the working of the body, and find ways to connect these views to his poetics. There is a remarkable similarity between Herbert's views on the practice of catechism, and his expressed intentions for his poems. The information that he conveys, be it by means of catechistical teaching or writing poetry, serves to elevate the individual souls of its recipients; poetry and the activities of the country priest are means to this end. In this practice the individual example of Christ is to be copied, as is evidently stated in "The Authour's Prayer before Sermon", included as a final section in *Priest*, in which Herbert exclaims: "Lord Jesu! teach thou me, that I may teach them: Sanctifie, and inable all my powers, that in their full strength they may deliver thy message reverently, readily, faithfully & fruitfully" (289). Teaching after the example of Christ is thus Herbert's duty, for, as Savoie has argued, to Herbert Christ *is* Scripture in a perceivable form.[78] One with God, Christ both re-lived and authored Scripture: imitating him in verse requires that one translate Christ's life to one's own by re-writing the Word in one's own image. Herbert alludes to this double challenge in 'The Thanksgiving', when he asks: "But how shall I imitate thee, and / Copie thy fair, though bloudie hand? (112, 15-16)." Despite his doubts, Herbert clearly achieved to imitate Christ in *The Temple*: that is, he took the Word and made it flesh; he shows himself while reading the Bible, which involves connecting this text to his corporeal disposition. He expected his readers to do the same after his example.

*2.7 'Hee that hath charge of soules transports them not in bundles'*

As a pastor, Herbert taught the individuals in his community to take care of themselves, requiring from them that they be active. As a poet, Herbert extends the principle that 'hee that hath charge of soules transports them not in bundles' to his readers. Presenting his poems which are restless and secure at the same time, combining conflict and holiness, life and divinity, Herbert offers his readers a devotional space, a temple or church, in which they can temporarily join forces. This coming together is enabled by a temporary identification of the reader with Herbert, in the process of which the poems are made one's own for as long as the reading lasts. The resulting purification of souls by aligning oneself with the language and typology of the Bible is closely related to the acquiring of self-knowledge. Involving oneself with the dynamics of Christian life means that readers weave themselves into the Bible, facing the 'afflictions' of the present by reconfiguring God's Word to fit one's private and particular situation. In *The Temple* Herbert shows how this can be done. He strips his own language of all pretence, making room for the presence of God's Word. In a similar fashion one's body and soul were to be restrained, or tam'd, to make room for God's presence in life. Herbert's poetry enacts this process. By re-living the afflictions and moments of

[77] Wilcox 1996, 191.
[78] Savoie, 68-9.

tranquillity experienced by the poetic personae, one is taught to recognise and profit from *The Temple* by applying it to one's own life.

Simplicity, 'neatness,' and exactness were the norms in Herbert's dealing with the Word of God, and he applied these principles to his poetry as well. In order to achieve a teaching situation that was both simple and exact, leaving room for the Word, he sought to build a community by touching his readers one by one. In his poetry, as in all of his pastoral dealings with the community, he aimed at teaching self-knowledge, which starts with the physical experience of taking control over one's body. His treatises on maintaining physical health, the proper functioning of a community, and *The Temple* should not be considered as separate; indeed, they are directly related to one another, fitting in the holy strategies that he employed as a parson. The combination of his ideas on the body and the building of a Christian community provide an all-inclusive world-view, in which his poems, as specific strategies to maintain physical and social order, have their place. The next chapter aims at a better understanding of these strategies, and their function in the lives that Herbert envisioned for his readers.

# chapter 3

## *Framing*

When God is made master of a family, he orders the disorderly

Outlandish proverb 983

*3.1 Introduction*

The aim of this chapter is to explore the principles of Herbert's main prose writings, *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie* (*TTS*) and *A Priest to the Temple* (*Priest*),[1] and to determine the position of *The Temple* in the systematic account of Christian life, and the role of the parson in that life, that he offers in these treatises. In Herbert's conception, the ideal parson is a tool at God's disposal. As an instrument of the church, the mediator of God's will, the parson 'orders the disorderly', for "an orderly life is so profitable, so vertuous, so decent, and so holy, it is worthy by all means to be embraced" (*TTS* 298). Imposing this order allows the parson to 'tune' his community to God's will, allowing it to take part in, or in fact to recreate, the Christian narrative. In the Christian tradition and throughout *The Temple* God is "the good physician", able to restore order to the struggles and ambiguities of human life;[2] Herbert's parson mediates this role.

This chapter should thus clarify Herbert's ambitions with his verse, the desire to work to the advantage of, to *heal*, his readers' souls. In Herbert's (reading) community *The Temple* could provide order; by offering its representations of spiritual conflicts and resolves, the dynamics of experience, it could effectuate harmony in the readers. This harmony was to be obtained individually, both in the body, which forms the topic of *TTS*, and mentally, as "the Parson settleth wavering minds" (*Priest* 283). If individuals maintained order in their lives, the community could prosper as a whole. Based in sound, 'tempered', bodies, social practices as language could become holy, less prone to their natural (human) fallacies. In 'The Parson Preaching', a chapter in *Priest*, Herbert asserts that holy language can be produced "by dipping, and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths, truly affecting, and cordially

[1] Both treatises can be found in *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941): pp. 291-303 (*TTS*) and 223-290 (*Priest*).

[2] Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Cemtury Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. 1972): p. 2-3.

expressing all that we say; so that the auditors may plainly perceive that every word is hart-deep" (233). Clearly, he aimed for 'hart-deep' language in *The Temple*: the plainness and 'neatness' of his language there is directly related to the self-control he sought to uphold, while sharing it with his community.

Concerning himself with the dynamics of the human body in *TTS*, Herbert presents an early modern appropriation of the Galenic theory of the passions. This treatise is part of a large number of contemporary works dedicated to the same topic, resulting in opposing and often contradictory views on how Galen was to be interpreted.[3] Having outlined the general characteristics of Herbert's theory of the passions, more particularly of *temperance*, control over the passions, in more depth, we move on to describe how his verse can be understood as a tool to achieve this control. Rather than reading and interpreting *The Temple* from a Galenic perspective, then, the aim of this chapter is to understand the beneficial effects of reading *The Temple* in the larger framework of Herbert's thinking on life.

Herbert makes it clear that the strategies of controlling one's body can be extended to controlling the mind and the community. The social implications of *TTS* are covertly present in its opening sentence. Having observed intemperance in his friends, the speaker that Herbert presents in *TTS* was urged on by "divers worthy young men" (291) to write this treatise, propagating "*[a] sober and orderly life*: for this had every way great force for the recovering and preserving of Health, as a disorderly life to the overthrowing of it; as I too well by experience found" (292). In an orderly life, one takes care of one's body, mind, soul, and fellow Christians simultaneously. As noted in the previous chapter, Herbert did not make a fundamental distinction between individual and communal health. In his study of Herbert's prose writing, Sean Mc Dowell has stressed that here the dynamics working in the soul, body, and mind are presented as connected: "Herbert tends to concentrate on the impact of theological principles on psychophysiological operations."[4] Herbert's thinking on the proper managing of bodies and minds formed the basis for his community, the holiness that he sought to enact, and the function that his poems were to fulfil in this system.

Herbert's mature life was characterised by ill health,[5] a biographical feature that deserves attention, because it can shed light on his private motivation to produce his treatises and poetry. In 1626 he suffered a serious illness, during which time he possibly retired to his brother Henry's house. There, Walton mentions in his *Life of Mr.George Herbert*, Herbert "became his own Physitian, and cur'd himself of his Ague, by forbearing Drink, and not eating any Meat, no not

[3] Schoenfeldt, Michael C. *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), p. 8.
[4] McDowell, "Holiness as a Psychological State in Herbert's *Briefe Notes on Valdesso's* Considerations," in *George Herbert Journal* 30.1&2 (2006-7), 109-24: p. 118.
[5] Cf. Joseph Summers, *George Herbert, His Religion and his Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954): pp. 29-48; and Helen Wilcox, "George Herbert," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (OUP, 2004-10).

Mutton, nor a Hen, or Pidgeon, unless they were salted; and by such a constant Dyet, he remov'd his Ague."[6] Amy Charles has suggested that during the time of this illness Herbert translated *TTS*,[7] the subject matter of which served him personally in restoring his health. His sickly nature is significant for an understanding of his role as a poet. In early modern times an unstable disposition of the artist was assumed to be necessary for the creation of art. Melancholy, one of the passions described by Galen, was regarded as the appropriate state of mind for the practising artist. The mental instability, associated with human mortality after the initial fall from grace is what makes art possible.[8] In Herbert's case, the unfitness of his body forced him to retire from the world occasionally, requiring self-reflection to consider ways of regaining control over his life.

*3.2 Passions and humours*

In *TTS* Herbert makes a case for the leading of a moderate and orderly life, by means of which one can overcome the changes inherent to one's body and the world.

> If the world consist of order, if our corporall life depend on the harmonie of humours & elements, it is no wonder that order should preserve, and disorder destroy. Order makes arts easie, and armies victorious, and retains and confirms kingdomes, cities, and families in peace. Whence I conclude, That an orderly life is the most sure way & ground of health and long dayes, and the true and onely medicine of many diseases. (*TTS* 297)

To Herbert, order is God's order; 'an orderly life' can be attained by conforming one's actions to the divine structure of the world. By mentioning the 'harmonie of humours & elements' Herbert mingles this Christian conception of life with the ancient Galenic theory of humours,[9] still popular in the early modern world, which provided an inclusive system to consider the condition of one's body in relation to its environment.[10] In humoral theory the 'elements' (fire, water, air, earth) were considered to be the building blocks of all formed matter occurring in nature, including the human body. The physical disposition of the body was the supposed result of the balance of its fluids: the humours. These humours were conceived of as the natural product of digestion, the

[6] Izaak Walton, *The Complete Angler & The Lives of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert & Sanderson* (1670. London: Macmillan and Co, 1906): p. 391.

[7] Amy M. Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (London: Cornell University Press, 1977): pp. 130-1.

[8] Cf. Vieda Skultans, *English Madness: Ideas on Insanity. 1580-1890* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979): pp. 17-26.

[9] The Greek physician and philosopher Galen (129-203 CE) is mentioned by name in *TTS* (p. 294), as well as in *Priest* (242-3). For Herbert's explicit concern with Galenic medical theory, cf. Curtis Whitaker, "Herbert's Pastor as Herbalist", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010): pp. 235-252.

[10] Cf. Lester S. King. "The Transformation of Galenism" in *Medicine in Seventeenth Century England* (Ed. Allen G. Debus, London: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 7-33. For a broad overview of the history of humoral theory, see Noga Arikha, *Passions and Tempers: A History of the Humours* (New York, NY: Ecco / HarperCollins, 2007).

most basic form of interaction between the body and its surroundings. To Herbert, controlling these processes was the basis of a sound life, as "[a] good digestion turneth all to health."[11] The Galenic system allows him to express that "the self is in a state of perpetual insurrection;"[12] he employs the humours to represent the disorder of the Christian life, directly related to sin, as explored in his early poem 'The Knell': "O help me God! / See they breake in / Disbanded humours, sorrows troops of Sinn" (ll. 9-11).[13] The method explored in *TTS* focuses on controlling the humours, or *change* in general, by controlling one's diet, thus 'helping' oneself by keeping one's body, God's temple, clean. To Herbert, then, controlling the body forms the basis of controlling life: maintaining 'an orderly life' starts at keeping the body in good health.

In Galenic thought, the balance of the humours determined the order and health of the individual body, which included its mind and soul; by analogy, then, "[t]he flux of the humors was believed to affect mental tranquillity."[14] A theory of the humours was also a theory of the passions. Melancholy, for instance, has its supposed corporeal basis in an abundance of black bile, the product of an overly productive spleen. This corporeal disposition of humours and passions was in turn associated with the elements and changing 'flux' of the world, which resulted in a conceptualisation of the dynamics of order and disorder, including mankind and its surroundings in one unified system.[15] This 'Renaissance world picture' was founded on the conception of man as a microcosm, a living metonym for the natural world.[16] Usage of the term *humour* was not limited to the human bloodstream, it could also be found in plants and animals.[17] This system of analogies allowed the incorporation of the theory of humours into narratives dealing with the course of life; it provided a network of metaphors, which connected the changing forms of the body and the world. In *TTS* Herbert merges this Galenic system with the Christian narrative, allowing him to combine the fixed, perfect (divine) characteristics of life with the elements, which are in flux and unfinished (in short: human), in one unified framework.

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[11] In *The English Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Helen Wilcox (CUP, 2007): p. 60. All references to *The Temple* are to this edition.

[12] Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Prayer and Power: George Herbert and Renaissance Courtship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991): p. 125.

[13] In Wilcox 2007, p. 17. This poem was part of the Williams Manuscript (*W*), but not included in *The Temple*.

[14] MacDonald, Michael. *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth Century England* (CUP, 1983): p. 186.

[15] Apart from this particular theory, a large amount of genres was employed in the early modern period to conceptualise the related orders of the human body, mind, or soul: theological writings; pneumatology, or the science of the soul, dealing with the nature of the human soul, dominated by the concept of Christian salvation; characterologies: "the science of character, esp. of its development, types and individual differences"; and physiognomical works: "the art of judging character and disposition from the features of the face or the form and lineaments of the body generally". Astrology established the relationship between the (mental) state of a patient and the musical order of the universe: "the configuration of the stars revealed the sources of the sufferer's dissonance and helped the healer to orchestrate his use of natural remedies to restore his client's sanity." Cf. MacDonald 194.

[16] For an early exploration of man as a little world see E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture. A Study of the Idea of Order in the Age of Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton* (1943. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), chapter 7: 'Macrocosm and Microcosm.'

[17] *OED* 2 of *humour* makes this clear: "Any fluid or juice of an animal or plant, either natural or morbid (Chiefly in mediæval physiology; now *rare* or *arch.*)" (14th-19th Cent.).

*3.3 Corporeal order: Sobrietie*

In Herbert's thinking, achieving and maintaining health, living life in harmony with God both physically and spiritually, started by taking control over the body. The Galenic view of the body was based on division. Organs or *dissimilar* (a literal contemporary meaning of *organic*) parts combined into a homogeneous unity, each organ with its specific function.[18] The unity (the composition of the separate organs) provided the desired harmony within one's body. This unity was conceived of as a dynamic state, a complex balance changing over time. Controlling these dynamics was the key to achieving order in one's life. To accomplish this, constant activity was required, as Michael Schoenfeldt has made clear: "Under the Galenic regime of the humors, which imagines all illness as an imbalance among the four nutritive fluids produced by digestion, soundness of mind and body is achieved not by immuring bodily fluids but rather by carefully manipulating them."[19] Physical, or 'living', harmony is thus a regularity achieved in flux: the application of order to change. This should remind us of Herbert's purposes for *The Temple*, the reading of which should provide order in the lives of the readers. The poetic reading process was to channel these changing lives on a regular basis, which can explain why Herbert urged that his poems be read frequently.

Reading poetry, however, is rather a complex strategy in this respect. With the humours as the natural product of digestion, controlling one's consumption patterns is the most straightforward way to apply order to one's life. Thus, Herbert can advocate the "settled course of *Sobrietie*, whose admirable power causeth that the meat and drink that is taken in fit measure, gives true strength to the bodie, all superfluities passing away without difficultie, and no ill humours being ingendred in the body" (*TTS* 293). Notably, although 'settled', sobriety is still a 'course', a process requiring purposeful activity to master the changing composition of the humours. From a biblical perspective, this changing interplay was first put into motion by the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.[20] The ungodly process of digestion provoked there produced the system of the unendingly changing humours, to which sobriety and *The Temple* were possible, temporary, cures.

Harmony in the body forms the basis for an orderly life; achieving this harmony guides Herbert's pastoral work. In *Priest* Herbert extends the principle of corporeal regulation to the maintenance of the house. In Chapter X, 'The Parson in his house' he prescribes that "The furniture of his [the Parson's] house is very plain, but clean, whole, and sweet" (241). By analogy, the language of *The Temple* was considered to be equally equipped with 'plain' and 'clean' language, ordered in 'sweet' lyrical patterns. Subsequently, Herbert prescribes that in the parson's house, order is also to be maintained by the people inhabiting the house. These inhabitants fall directly

[18] King, 11.
[19] Schoenfeldt 1999, 14.
[20] Cf. Genesis 3: 6.

under the parson's command, and form an exemplary community for the entire congregation. As he explains: "The Parson is very exact in the governing of his house, making it a copy and model for his Parish. He knows the temper, and pulse of every person in his house, and accordingly either meets with their vices, or advanceth their vertues" (239). In *The Temple*, those occupying its imagined space, the readers, fall under the same command of the parson for as long as the reading process lasts. The poet should be familiar with 'the temper and pulse' of every reader; he should be 'very exact' in creating his poetic structures, 'making it a copy and model for his Parish'.

Herbert extended the maintenance of the parson's house to the need for order in the church. This is where his prescriptions for sobriety and *The Temple*, with its central section named 'the Church', meet. Herbert states in Chapter XIII of *Priest*, 'The Parson's Church', that "The Countrey Parson hath a speciall care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called" (246). In analogy to the 'naked simplicity' of *The Temple* all things in the church were to be kept 'sweet and clean'

> as following the Apostles two great and admirable rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently, and in order*: The second, *Let all things be done to edification*, 1 *Cor*. 14. For these two rules comprise and include the double object of our duty, God, and our neighbour; the first being for the honour of God; the second for the benefit of our neighbour. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully, and exactly contain, even in externall and indifferent things, what course is to be taken; and put them to great shame, who deny the Scripture to be perfect. (246-7)

The parson was to maintain and achieve God's order, the order of Scripture. Thus harmonising his flock with the Word, he sought to heal the imperfections inherent to life. To accomplish this, the parson needed to keep his surroundings, his body, his church, his house, and his language clean and exact. The poems of *The Temple* fitted perfectly with Herbert's pastoral intentions, both of which were directed at accomplishing God's order for the benefit of the community.

### *3.4 Temperance and self-knowledge*

In Herbert's treatise *TTS* the concept of *temperance* is given more prominence than in Cornaro's original version of this text. Herbert added this term to the title of his translation, whereas it was absent in the original, indicating that he wished to emphasise its importance.[21] In Herbert's thinking, temperance denotes dynamic control, the application of sobriety to all aspects of life. His readers seemed to share his fascination for this concept. In 1678 *TTS* was reprinted as *The Temperate Man*, indicating that temperance had come to be seen as the main subject of this treatise;[22] a closer look at its use and meaning should tell us more about the peculiarities of

[21] Cf. Charles, 130-1.
[22] Hutchinson, 291.

Herbert's Christianised version of Galenism, his model of order and disorder. This, in turn, can serve to understand the working of *The Temple*.

Herbert indicates that a temporary state of order can be achieved by means of temperate actions: constant 'tempering' activity is required to keep to an appropriate Christian course. Temperance or *temper* bears two meanings important in this context: measure and moderation.[23] Moderation can be achieved by living, eating, drinking, digesting in the right, restricted proportions, ensuring that one leads a measured life – a life in tune with God. In 'A Prayer after Sermon' in *Priest* Herbert makes use of these meanings, while reflecting on the wholesome tempering effects of the Word:

> And now Lord, thou hast fed us with the bread of life [Scripture]: so man did eat Angels food: O Lord, blesse it: O Lord, make it health and strength unto us; still striving & prospering so long within us, until our obedience reach the measure of thy love, who hast done for us as much as may be. (290)

By reading, consuming, Scripture one can achieve motions within the body that neutralise the inordinate motions of the humours. Scripture is the food of angels, in that it does not cause disturbance: on the contrary, digesting the Word should lead to health. By reading the Bible one can achieve order, because it allows one to draw closer to the standard set by Christ, who set the appropriate measure of life, the enacted Christian narrative that one can follow by re-enacting, or imitating his example. As a parson, Herbert attempted to mediate this re-enactment, translating the principles of the Bible and of Christ's example to his own life, re-experiencing this life while reflecting on it in light of the Christian narrative. He represented these reflections in his exemplary behaviour, both in the church and in *The Temple*. Reflection and enactment, mind and body, thus become one, and communicate via the same process. This is the mechanism that Herbert envisioned: it shaped his life as parson and poet.

The Word made flesh, Christ is the archetypical example of human practice and divine order combined in one life. Herbert associates Christ with temperance in 'Good Friday', in which he expresses his failure to fathom Christ's life, to 'measure', his love and suffering, in language, addressing him personally: "O my chief good, / How shall I measure out thy bloud?" (126, 1-2). On Herbert's aiming for measure or temperance after Christ's example, Terry Sherwood has remarked that "to solve the problem of measurement is to imitate Christ's suffering." Here, then, we can see the same conflict at work as in Herbert's and his readers' perception of his verse, indicated in 1.2: one has to re-live exemplary crises to experience order. The intended function of *The Temple* was to help the reader attain the proper Christian measure in life, by re-living Christ's suffering, his passions culminating in the Passion, through Herbert's struggling personae. In line

[23] Cf. *TTS,* on the taking in of food in just 'measure' (293), and on 'Moderation' (294).

with the primary role that Herbert assigned to the body in this process, Sherwood asserts that "[the] heart's 'bloud,' its affections, must be rightly ordered in penitential suffering; they must be conformed, fitted to Christ's suffering."[24] This imitation of Christ's suffering can be achieved by striving to attain regularity, both within one's own body, and within the community that was willing to accord with God, united in the Christian church.

This double, yet unified, source of harmony, both from within and from above, attained by imposing order on the body and receiving it from God, resides in the early modern usage of the word *temper*. The *OED* definitions of this term, related to Galenic thought, as in "The due or proportionate mixture or combination of elements or qualities" (in use in the 14th-18th Cent.), relate temper to *form*, and, by extension, to the soul: one's ideal temper is the proper organisation of matter into harmonious order.[25] In this respect, temperance is the activity to aspire to this order, the attempt to force life in the ideal moulds provided in the Bible. *OED* 4a. "The constitution, character or quality of a substance or body (in use from the 15th-18th Cent.)" and 4b. "Of things immaterial: character, quality" (16th – 17h Cent.) suggest that one's temper is an image of one's soul, and that the strife for temperance represents an attempt to purify the soul. This process of purification requires that one applies one's faculties properly. *OED* 1. "rational self-restraint" signifies that this strife can be achieved by the proper application of reason, implanted by God in the soul, to restrain, moderate, or control oneself.[26] One's faculties and activities, the workings of body and mind, then, are to be made subservient to the divine patterns to which one should aspire. Temperance is the restraining of one's diet and thoughts, making room for the presence of God. Reading *The Temple* is a strategy that can help the reader achieve temperance. It serves as a form of 'self-restraint': it allows readers to measure their lives against Herbert's, making room for God, allowing a temporary purification of the soul.

In order to restrain oneself, one needs to know oneself; to this purpose, Christians should turn to the Bible, as Herbert's poem "The H. Scriptures (2)" makes clear:

[24] Terry G. Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 78.

[25] Cf. Summers, 73-95, for an account of how this principle functions in *The Temple*. See also *OED* 6 of *temper*: "The condition of the atmosphere with regard to heat and cold, dryness and humidity" (15th-18th Cent.).

[26] Cf. Stephen Gaukroger, "Introduction," in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Gaukroger (London: Routledge, 1998): pp. 1-17. Reason, a prominent feature of the human mind, implanted in the soul with divine authority, was seen as the traditional opponent of the passions, which, taken more broadly, could also include anything that escapes instant conscious understanding: emotions, dreams, involuntary thoughts, as well as the traditional vices, the seven deadly sins. The proper balance between reason and the passions was the topic of much debate. The two traditions that predominated after classical times were the Stoic tradition and the Augustinian tradition. The Stoic tradition advocated a sole dependence on reason and indifference to the passions. The Augustinian tradition was in itself not aversive to the passions, as long as they could be controlled. The combination of virtue and reason as the forces to control the passions represents the Augustinian version of the theory of humours; one should employ these characteristically human traits to control the beast within oneself. On the whole, in early modern England the Augustinian, Herbertian, tradition was dominant, acknowledging the constantly sinful, disproportionate disposition of human beings, and focusing on strategies to channel these dispositions.

Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
    And the configurations of their glorie!
    Seeing not onely how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the storie.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
  Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie:
  Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christians destinie:

Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
  And comments on thee: for in ev'ry thing
  Thy words do finde me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood. (1-12)

The first stanza invokes the Christian Narrative as a 'storie', a framework that is coherent and can be comprehended. As noted in the previous chapter, Herbert conviction was that the Bible gains significance when used in Christian lives; self-knowledge is achieved by living and understanding one's life in the light of the Bible. In this context, Chana Bloch, in her study of the impact of the Bible on Herbert's writing, has remarked that "[The Bible] marks his poetry so distinctively because it first moulds his life": "For Herbert (…) the understanding of Scripture is bound up with self-understanding."[27] The Bible can thus serve to temper or control the self; reversely, self-control allows one to grasp the significance of Scripture.

In Herbert's conception, however, self-knowledge should also involve introspection, which can serve to monitor and balance the substances in the body. Control over the body is a precondition to fulfil one's duties as a Christian. An orderly, properly surveyed, body is the first requirement for holiness, as it allows one to make room (literally) for God's presence in life. The digestion of food, then, should not get in the way of one's (devotional) activities, as Herbert makes clear in this passage from *Priest*: "To guide them in this [fulfilling their duty], there are three rules: first, the custome, and knowledg of their own body, and what it can well digest: The second, the feeling of themselves in time of eating; (…) The third is the observation with what appetite they sit down" (266-7). "[The] faults of eating" (266) can be prevented by self-scrutiny of the observing consumer, by means of which one can measure the intake of food:

> For knowing what one usually can well disgest, and feeling, when I go to meat in what disposition I am, either hungry or not, according as I feele my self, either I

[27] Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1985): pp. 2, 10. Further on Bloch explicates: "Believing that what he finds in the Bible intensely concerns him, Herbert brings to his study of the text that minute attention with which we examine ourselves in the mirror, that absorption with which we read whatever is written about us: it is his mirror, his story" (29).

> take my wonted proportion, or diminish of it. Yet Phisicians bid those that would live in health, not keep an uniform diet, but to feed variously, now more, now lesse. (267)

Herbert's corporeal self-scrutiny, then, consists of two mental activities: reminding oneself of the past dynamics of the body, and measuring its present state by observing one's feelings. Both activities feature prominently in *The Temple*; their exemplary forms can be revived by reading the poems, thus aiding readers to 'live in health' by calibrating their knowledge of the dynamics of their own bodies. As argued in 1.6, this knowledge should not exist of set rules and doctrines. Instead, Herbert's conception of self-knowledge is that it is personal, 'lived', dynamic, allowing readers to 'feed variously': to apply diets fitted to the specific time-bound conditions of their bodies.

Both in his treatises and in *The Temple*, Herbert offers strategies for acquiring self-knowledge. His writings served the purpose of teaching his readers how to look after themselves. In this respect it is worth mentioning that a similar Herbertian emphasis on the importance of self-knowledge is expressed in what was probably the most influential work of social pedagogy in Herbert's time, Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622):

> And albeit true it is that Galen saith, we are commonly beholden for the disposition of our minds to the temperature of our bodies, yet much lieth in our power to keep that fount from empoisoning by taking heed to ourselves.[28]

Controlling the 'temperature' of the body, that is, both its inner harmony and the relations to the elementary structure of its surroundings, is the basis of a sound life. Sobriety serves to control the temperature of the body, and 'the disposition of our minds'. Self-knowledge, then, has a physical basis in the achieving of balance between oneself and the world. This accurate observing of one's own private dynamics should serve to keep the body healthy, as a temple fit to receive God, a temple fitted to the holy lines written in one's soul.

In *TTS* Herbert extends the classical and Renaissance adage to 'know thyself' to the broader practice of temperance. Self-knowledge is an essential requirement for living an orderly life. It varies between private 'selves', in line with Herbert's specific attention for the individual, which shines through in all his activities as a parson.

> For indeed no man can be a perfect Physician to another, but to himself onely. The reason whereof is this, Every one by long experience may know the qualities of his own nature, and what hidden properties it hath, what meat and drink agrees best with it: which things in others cannot be known without such observation, as is

[28] Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (1622. Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 144.

> not easily to be made upon others; especially since there is a greater diversitie of tempers, (…) Whereupon I conclude, since none can have a better Physician then himself, nor better Physick then a Temperate Life, Temperance by all means is to be embraced. (*TTS* 297-8)

Without self-knowledge, one cannot aspire to lead a temperate, and thus an orderly, life. The connotation of temper as *essence* is important here; striving to lead a temperate life is striving to live in accordance with an essence (identity – that which remains the same) that is already there, ingrained in the soul. One needs self-reflection to discover that essence, and temper one's activities accordingly; self-knowledge serves to tune practical activity to divine and perfect patterns – the same process that Herbert tried to re-create in *The Temple*.

Extending the principles of sobriety to the Christian community, expounded in *TTS* and *Priest*, respectively, Herbert conceived of temperance as a strategy that was both private and social. A contemporary treatise on the passions and their place in the art of rhetoric, Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1601)[29] may serve to understand this relation. The opening chapter of Wright's treatise explores the concept of self-knowledge, which forms the basis of his thinking on the passions. According to Wright, self-knowledge concerns both the private self, and the universal inclinations of human beings:

> This subject I entreat of comprehendeth the chief object that all the ancient Philosophers aimed at, wherein they placed the most of their felicity: that was *Nosce teipsum*, "know thyself"; the which knowledge principally consisteth of a perfect experience every man hath of himself in particular, and an universal knowledge of men's inclinations in common. The former is greatly helped by the latter, the which knowledge is delivered in this treatise. (92-93)

Wright's treatise, then, aims at exploring the universal inclinations of mankind, while acknowledging that this knowledge can be acquired through private experience. This combination of strategies, aimed at the particular and universal, is inherent to *The Temple*, in which Herbert seeks to merge the universal truths of the Bible with life-experience. As noted in the previous chapter, to Herbert, living the Christian life centres around connecting one's life to the Christian narrative, that is, re-living Christ's perfect example. In the introductory poem of *The Temple*, 'The Church-Porch', leading up to the persona's conflicts in 'The Church', Herbert makes the connection between the individual and social procuring of self-knowledge.

[29] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall*, ed. William Webster Newbold (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1986).

Who keeps no guard upon himself, is slack,
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.
Man is a shop of rules, a well truss'd pack,
Whose every parcel under-writes a law.
Lose not thy self, nor give thy humours way:
God gave them to thee under lock and key.

By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thy self: see what thy soul doth wear.
Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own (54, 139-48)

As the prelude to the main section of *The Temple*, these lines can be regarded as a reading guide for 'The Church'. Herbert refuses to draw clear boundaries between universal and private knowledge of the self. 'Man is a shop of rules'; yet, these rules can be discovered by turning to private experiences. Herbert urges the youth addressed here, and any other subsequent reader, to employ activities in line with God's intentions: the keeping of temperance, balancing the humours, the passions, and the self. If the soul is the communally constructed essence of the self, it is one's duty to gear one's behaviour to fit in with this essence. For the readers of *The Temple*, Herbert's poetry could serve as an instrument in this process. Rhetoric and medical care go hand in hand.

*3.5 The parson imposing order*

For Herbert, religion was a daily practice that should guide one in leading a temperate life, thus providing a shield from the extremities of experience, both negative and positive. In his *Life of George Herbert* Walton states that Herbert "would often say, [that] *Religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates, and sets rules to it.*"[30] Religion is to be enacted and re-lived constantly as a process of communal moderation; it should serve to keep one close to one's true 'temper' – the essence of the holy lines written in the soul. In this respect, religion enables the embodiment of the Christian narrative.[31] In this constant process, the proper application of reason, as the faculty that can bring (self-) understanding, is a central part of Herbert's religious activity, urging him to advocate "a reasonable service; not to offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoyd of reason; but when we use our reason, and apply our powers to the service of Him, that gives them" (*Priest* 232). In Herbert's thinking, then, a certain detachment from experience for the purpose of reflection, and a disciplined enactment of the Christian rules of conduct were requirements for a sound religious life. Both kinds of behaviour were to be performed simultaneously.

[30] Quoted in Wilcox 2007, xliii.

[31] In this vein we should also interpret Oley's early assertion on the function of the liturgy: ""He [Herbert] thought also that a set Liturgy was of great use in respect of those without, whether erring Christians, or unbelieving men. That when we had used our best arguments against their errours or unbeliefe, we might shew them a Form wherein we did, and desired they would serve Almighty God with us." In *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1983): p. 81.

As the representative of God, the parson should teach his community the methods of applying religion. For Herbert, the parson was to be a teacher and a healer, a thinker and practitioner, at the same time. In his study of medicine and insanity in the early modern period, Michael MacDonald has noted the parallels between medical practitioners and priests: both fulfilled an instrumental role, to be performed for the benefit of the community: "Although their potions and methods differed considerably, (…) medical practitioners shared the same aspiration [as priests]: to heal their patients' bodies and minds by restoring their harmony with the natural order,"[32] a process coined by Noga Arikha as "cosmic attunement,"[33] denoting the constant 'tuning' that was necessary between the dynamics of the body and its surroundings. According to MacDonald, the tuning of selves was a traditional role for the clergy: "Preachers taught their flocks to interpret emotional turmoil in religious and moral terms, and priests solaced the mentally disturbed by urging them to repent their sins and seek refuge in God's mercy."[34] Herbert's parson fits this profile.[35] Apart from teaching his community how to interpret its emotions, he also offered it material examples: in his exemplary behaviour as a parson, in his poetry, and in his abstract, generalised account of strategies for controlling inner turmoil by appropriating Christian doctrine (the main topic of his treatises). Herbert explicitly claims a role for the parson as "Physician" (259). In accordance with the actions of Christ, the parson can heal others by restoring faith, as to "sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in the midst of their pains" (*Priest* 261). Prayer was an important part of Herbert's pastoral method of healing: "In curing of any, the Parson and his Family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a Parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop, to the Church" (*Priest* 262). Connecting with God is the pastoral way towards healing; it can be achieved by observing temperance, thus readying oneself for prayer.

By aligning oneself with God's Word one could heal oneself. The writing of Herbert's contemporary, acquaintance, and fellow preacher and poet John Donne, more particularly his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624),[36] may serve to understand this function of Scripture. In the *Devotions* Donne explores the healing power of the Word in depth, recounting the thoughts and anxieties of an individual confronted with his own mortality, whilst lying on his sickbed. Presenting a persona in times of extreme physical ill-being in meditations, 'expostulations' and prayers, Donne's *Devotions* resemble Herbert's *Temple*, in that they connect physical illness and anguish with an intense sense of devotion, and an arduous process of self-scrutiny. Donne's metaphors

[32] MacDonald, 175. MacDonald mentions that the practice of healing in the seventeenth century involved "humanistic physicians, medical astrologers, apothecaries, and folk healers." For Herbert's thoughts on the role of the Physician, cf *TTS*, 297.
[33] Arikha, 124.
[34] MacDonald, 176. Although MacDonald is concerned here with those labeled as mentally ill, we can derive from his analysis that the clergy were involved in the process of healing.
[35] For Herbert's explicit concerns with medicine, cf. Whitaker.
[36] John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, ed. A. Raspa (Queen's / McGill UP, 1995).

pick out the textual nature of body and soul, addressing the struggles of mankind: "O miserable condition of man! Which was not imprinted by God" (3). In Donne's conception, the condition of disorder is the straying from the perfect form that was 'imprinted' on human life at its creation – the harmonious union between man and the written Word (Herbert's 'words written in the soul'). The natural course of life and the inordinate effects of time cohere with the improper use of language.

Donne states clearly that involvement with the written Word can generate recovery. For Donne, as for Herbert, healing is based in the purification of language. In the *Devotions* Donne presents the human body as a text, while attributing healing power to those who can 'read' it: "They [the doctors] have seen me and heard me, arraigned me in these fetters and received the evidence; I have cut up mine own anatomy, dissected myself and they are gone to read upon me" (52). The dissection of the body enables its being read, or analysed, by the physicians; they can interpret, and make whole, its separate dissimilar parts. Indeed, the recognition of this dissimilarity is essential for the diagnosis of illness; all results from the body being out of tune with the Word. Recovery is the restoration of the soul with Scripture, for "all the way, O my God (ever constant to thine own ways), thou hast proceeded openly, intelligibly, manifestly by the book" (55). To Donne, then, reading the Bible is a reorganisation of the soul – a form which, transcending time and death, must also be 'ever constant'. In this respect, it is significant that, as Elizabeth Clarke has indicated, 'motion', apart from referring to the passions, could also apply to "an impulse from God:"[37] in opposition to the passions (the e-motions), then, motions could also be beneficial for the soul. Temperance is the practice of staying on God's path; it is the art of selecting those changes that can heal, rather than harm, the soul. The difficulty, however, frequently expressed by Herbert, is that the criteria for selection differ for each individual.

The mediation of order by means of medicine and theology should converge in the exemplary life of Herbert's country parson. Herbert dedicated one poem to 'the Priesthood' in *The Temple*, in which he renders the principles of *TTS* and *Priest* in poetic form.[38]

> Blest Order, which in power dost so excel,
> That with th´one hand thou liftest to the sky,
> And with the other throwest down to hell
> In thy just censures; fain would I draw nigh,
> Fain put thee on, exchanging my lay-sword
> For that of th'holy word. (551, 1-6)

[37] Clarke, *Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 18.

[38] A distinctly self-reflective poem, 'The Priesthood' presents Herbert's premonitions about his pastoral community. Presumably, it was composed in 1628 or 1629, shortly before Herbert's actual ordination in 1630 (Cf. Wilcox 2007, p. 550).

The speaker in this poem addresses order itself, the order of 'th'holy word.' The priest assumes his function in this order; his putting on of the holy Word, embodying it, allows him to take part in its 'power.' In the remainder of the poem, Herbert expresses his unworthiness to perform this task, and the purity (cf. ll. 29-30) that is inherent to the vocation itself, entitling its practitioners to consecrate Holy Communion,[39] in which ritual Christians momentarily unite with, or embody, God. In daily life, the parson's task is to prolong this union by observing temperance. With this task comes enormous 'power' and responsibility, for which the priest needs to practice humility, submitting his God-given 'instruments', his mind and his body, to the larger purposes of mediating God's order.

Reputedly, Herbert met these demands.[40] He achieved this by means of a continuous identification with the life of Christ. Herbert considered it the parson's duty "[*to*] *put on the profound humility, and the exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary vertues of that sort*" (*Priest* 237).[41] The parson does not transcend the ordinary trials and tribulations of life; indeed, as he needs both to face his own 'adversity' and serve as an example for his community, he faces a double challenge. His aiming for 'the exact temperance' of Christ is an ideal constantly compromised by change and time. Indeed, for the introspective parson, this constant failure to perform the task laid out for him was a continuous 'adversity' in itself, and another affliction to cope with. The parson is drenched in disorder. Not at any point can he claim to be above matters of life, yet it was his task to restore the relationship between God and his community, as the blessed order of the priestly profession transcends his actual life, making it instrumental in the service of God.

*3.6 The framing of the mind: rhetoric and poetry*

By tuning oneself to God and the Word, as perceived by the Anglican priests Donne and Herbert, one can thus restore order to one's life. Ultimately, religious activity serves to ready oneself to be healed by God. In his 'The 23rd Psalme' Herbert acknowledges God's role as a physician, who heals when man falls into disorder: "Or if I stray, he [God] doth convert / And bring my mind in frame" (594, 9-10). God has the power to restore order in the mind, to change its dynamics for the better. He is the 'perfect Artist'; the order from which one can 'stray' is of his making. Incorporating God's rules can ensure that the motions of life can be controlled, a principle to which Herbert alludes in the same poem: "Surely thy sweet and wondrous love / Shall measure all my days (21-2)." By observing temperance, one can be tempered in return.

[39] Wilcox 2007, 552.

[40] Cf. Ferrar's preface to *The Temple* "His [Herbert's] obedience and conformotie to the Church and the discipline thereof was singularly remarkable" (In 'The Printers to the Reader', Wilcox 2007, 4).

[41] For the tradition of physically identifying with Christ, see also St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians 6:17: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus".

From a Galenic perspective, the proper application of God's Word can restore the balance in body and mind, a balance in the humours and the passions. With *The Temple* Herbert sought to achieve a similar effect. Aiming to move his readers, Herbert placed himself in a tradition of rhetorical practice. [42] The moving of the affections of an audience by means of words is the task of rhetoric, defined in *OED* 1a. as "the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order that he may express himself with eloquence." Skilled orators should select their words after the effects they sought to achieve in their audience. The orator's craft lies in employing language to interfere with the behaviour of a selected audience, as Brian Vickers has made clear: "[t]he unity of rhetoric as a system is seen in the connections it makes between language and feelings: it moves from psychology to style (or *elocutio*) and back again, offering a coherent model of how language can influence behaviour."[43] Rhetoric is the employment of a distinct set of rules in order to manipulate the (mental) behaviour of recipients. Motions in the receiving minds are generated by means of specific structural principles that are applied to words. Elsewhere, Vickers has argued that "[early modern] rhetoric had a coherent theory of rhetorical figures as psychologically created, pockets of emotional energy."[44] Herbert sought to transmit this energy to his readers, effectuating beneficial motions in them, thus tuning them to God.

God's and Herbert's *framing*, then, the imposition of order by means of holy words capable of moving the emotions, can effectuate a temporary reconciliation between God and man.[45] This reconciliation is the basis of healing. *Frame* is a central term in Herbert's poetry; it always bears the sense of order being applied to matter. Framing is the manipulation of forms. According to Wilcox, Herbert employs *Frame* to mean "[created] form or structure. The word is used by Herbert to refer to a range of kinds of creation: the universe (…), the world (…), the human body (…), the heart (…), the temple building (…), and the form of a poem" (*The English Poems*, xlii).[46] The sense that all belongs to a larger order licenses Herbert's conception that frames are 'discovered' rather than invented; a newly created frame should aim at the imitation of the divine order already present in the world. Herbert observes this principle by re-making the Bible to fit his experiences

[42] For the influence of (classical) rhetorical theory and practice on early modern poetry, cf. John Porter Houston,, *The Rhetoric of Poetry in the Renaissance and Seventeenth Century* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Thomas O. Sloan and Raymond B. Waddington, eds. *The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry: From Wyatt to Milton* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1974); Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory* (1966), or more specifically to Herbert, Christopher Hodgkins, ""'Showing Holy': Herbert and the Rhetoric of Sanctity", in *New Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century English Religious Lyric*, ed. John Roberts. (Missouri, Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1994): pp. 222-236.

[43] Brian Vickers, "On the Practicalities of Renaissance Rhetoric", in *Rhetoric Revalued: Papers from the International Society for the History of Rhetoric*, ed. B. Vickers (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982): pp. 133-41.

[44] Vickers, "Rhetoric", in *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry: Donne to Marvell*, ed. Thomas Corns (CUP, 1993), 101- 20, p. 105.

[45] Cf. Sherwood on 'Fit Framing', 77-99.

[46] Wilcox 2007, xlii.

and his poetic frames. The language that he uses shies away from invention for its own sake, staying as close to the Bible as possible.

The framing of the mind in the service of God is a motion against the results of that first movement away from God in Eden, where Eve was persuaded to act against God's will, which resulted in physical change.[47] Constant framing, manipulation, was necessary since the original bond between God and mankind was disturbed. An influential, slightly earlier, treatise on rhetoric, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553)[48] makes this connection between rhetoric and Christianity explicit, succinctly indicating the dynamics of the history of language, and indeed of *The Temple*, in the title of his preface: "Eloquence first geven by God, after loste by man, and laste repayred by God agayne" (16-21 [A3]). In short, and to use Herbert's terms, Wilson conceptualises the history of language as moving from 'sweet' to 'bitter' to sweet again. The frames imposed by holy rhetorical practice, then, can provide structure in a Christian society that has fallen to disorder after the fall of mankind, in Wilson's *Arte* depicted as "Goddes will not knowen, man againste manne, one agaynste another, and all agaynste order" (17, ll. 5-7). Herbert's holy rhetoric, which can refer to all behaviour of the parson that can be perceived as representative of God's order, should help the community to know God's will anew, temporarily resolving the inherited disturbances of the human species.

The characteristics of the reception of *The Temple*, identified in the previous chapter, (1) creating a physical space, (2) addressing, and uniting oneself with, the individual recipient, and (3) achieving a beneficial effect, can be retraced to Herbert's statements on rhetoric in *Priest*. The parson's rhetorical activity, primarily his sermons but also daily conversation, as an intermediary between God and the community is conceptualised as a physical space: "When he intermits he is ever very well supllyed by some able man who treads in his footsteps, and will not throw down *what he hath built*" (*Priest* 232, italics my own). Herbert considers sermonising a kind of art, a craft in itself, saying of the parson that "[w]hen he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art," selecting his topics to address individuals, "for particulars ever touch, and awake more than generals" (*Priest* 232-3). In this manner, the framing of the mind by means of 'Sacred Rhetorick' can serve the purification of the souls of the community, reflected in the holiness of the practice itself: "the character of his [the parson's] Sermon is Holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy" (*Priest* 233). In his struggle for perfection, Herbert thus sought to repress any unnecessary form of language-use. Aiming for harmony in the minds of his audience, his words serve only that purpose, not being allowed to shine for themselves. Language is 'sweet' when it coincides with God's will. *The Temple*'s functioning, identified in the previous chapter, fits this profile seamlessly, indicating that Herbert made no actual distinction between the ideal parson's rhetorical, 'framing', activities and his work as a poet.

[47] The scene is described in Genesis 3.
[48] Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. Thomas J. Derrick (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1982).

With *The Temple*, Herbert attempted to take part in the process of 'cosmic attunement' between man and the larger order of things. Herbert often resorts to musical imagery to describe this, essentially musical, process. A prominent metaphor in the poems of *The Temple* is that of man as a lute that is constantly out of tune. In 'Easter' Herbert applies this metaphor to reflect on the larger Christian order in which *The Temple* should be placed:

> Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
> With all thy art.
> The crosse taught all wood to resound his name,
> Who bore the same.
> His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
> Is best to celebrate this most high day. (139, 7-12)

The main metaphor worked out here, of the crucified Christ as a lute, was an established one in Herbert's time.[49] In 'Easter' the body of Christ on the cross is compared with the poet's lute, where the cross is the resonance box of the instrument, and Christ's body, with its 'stretched sinews' as the strings, is the prime source of the music. In order to sing appropriately on 'this most high day' the lute needs to be tuned to the music of the scene of the Passion, ensuring a holy continuation of this narrative.

Aiming to mediate order and to integrate divine language with his own, Herbert aspired to incorporate musical structures in his poems. As noted in the previous chapter, he trusted music more than he trusted language: music, and church-music in particular, was unreservedly 'sweet', despite of its own dynamics of discord and harmony. In congruence with this preference, Herbert was often considered a musician, rather than a poet. Contemporary readers of *The Temple* frequently acknowledged its distinct musical qualities.[50] Daniel Baker's "*On Mr.*George Herbert'*s Sacred Poems, called, The Temple*" (1697), envisages Herbert singing to the angels in heaven:

> There thou dost reign, and there
> Thy Bus'ness is the same 'twas here,
> And thine old Songs thou singest o're agen:
> The Angels and the Heav'nly Quire
> Gaze on thee, and admire
> To hear such Anthems from an earthly Lyre,
> Their own Hymns almost equall'd by an human Pen.[51]

[49] Cf. 1.1.

[50] For the enduring relationship between words and music in early modern verse, cf. Louise Schleiner, *The Living Lyre in English Verse from Elizabeth through the Restoration* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984).

[51] In Patrides, 142. Original source: Baker, 'Poems upon Several Occasions' (1697).

Herbert's poems were read, experienced, and interpreted by readers other than himself after his death. Baker uses this fact to grasp his experience of reading *The Temple*. Herbert is envisaged as a heavenly singer, whose earthly songs can match the music of the angels. At the same time, Baker does not lose sight of the problematic relation between music and language: divine music is 'almost equall'd' by Herbert's writing – but not quite. By depicting the new state of Herbert's poems, Baker manages to make sense of the 'old Songs', the ones he has been reading. If music or musical structure represents heaven in this respect, life on earth is characterised by the alternate presence and absence of (divine) music.

Herbert represents these musical dynamics in his poetry. As part of the mixed imperfections and perfections of his verse, always moving through chaos towards its 'closes', we find the presence of divine music, the original order of creation, which still resounds in human experience, and thus in *The Temple*, whenever a union with God is achieved. In 'Church-musick', we get a glimpse of Herbert's own conception of divine music:

> Sweetest of sweets, I thank you: when displeasure
> Did through my bodie wound my minde,
> You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
> A daintie loddging me assign'd.
>
> Now I in you without a bodie move,
> Rising and falling with your wings (239, 1-6)

Differently from *The Temple*, church-music, itself 'sweet' and 'daintie', leads one away from the conflicts of life, to a space distant from the world. Music does not require to be made one's own; on the contrary, music takes control over the recipient, determining the movements of the soul. Herbert is constantly aiming to incorporate music in his life. As remarked in the previous chapter, sweetness and neatness are qualities that he sought to apply to his life as a priest. The order in his church and in his daily behaviour is a reflection of the divine musical order that gives shape to life; the order to which one must attune oneself to stay in good health.

*3.7 'When God is made master of a family, he orders the disorderly'*

Representative of the Order of the priesthood, Herbert's parson embodies the principle that 'when God is made master of a family, he orders the disorderly.' Ordering disorder, framing the selves in his community to achieve the health that springs from 'tempering' others is the pastoral task that Herbert sought to perform as a priest. In his conception, *The Temple* is a component of this task. He envisaged a system in which the parson's life was representative of God's order within the Christian community. Herbert's parson was to offer a lived example of how one should merge God's will, expressed in the Word, with actual experience. As Bloch has argued, "Herbert

shows (…) how 'thy [God's] words' and 'my [the Christian] life' explain each other, how 'doctrine' and 'life' are one;"[52] as a pastor of his community, it was his task to represent and share this knowledge. *The Temple* is part of the execution of this task: by means of it, Herbert represents and shares his knowledge of how one should live a Christian life. But how is 'emotional' information communicated by means of *The Temple* to help start a process of self-discovery in its readers?

Teaching by example, the poems of *The Temple* are both expressive and didactic;[53] indeed, their didactic function is executed by presenting the readers with spiritual experience. This practice serves to set an example for his readers, with the ultimate aim of harmonising his community with the will of God. In *Priest* Herbert makes clear that communication, the sharing of knowledge is of prime importance if a Christian community is to function properly:

> As one Countrey doth not bear all things, that there may be a Commerce; so neither hath God opened, or will open all to one, that there may be a traffick in knowledg between the servants of God, for the planting both of love, and humility. (229)

Individuals were to help each other to achieve temperance. Bloch has remarked that "[Herbert] saw himself as belonging to a community of believers – one sense of the word *temple* – and did not doubt that what was true of himself would be true of others as well."[54] In *The Temple* he presents experiences of Christian personae, offering these to his community. Here, he presents his poetic examples of spiritual experience and self-discovery for those reading and reconstructing these poems. By communicating with each individual reader in this way, Herbert forges his community.

Herbert's poetics and his entire conception of the role of the parson are deeply connected to rhetorical practice. The parson sets out to communicate with his audience, moving minds in the directions that accord with God's music and Word. Yet, it seems clear that *The Temple* should be treated as a separate form of rhetoric – a form of art distinguished by its own principles and structure. Apart from a parson and thinker, Herbert was a craftsman, a creator. With Marion White Singleton, we should be concerned with "the generative possibilities Herbert has succeeded in building into his *Temple*," just as "Scripture, to Herbert, generates multiple configurations."[55] The next logical step, then, would be to explain Herbert's decision to use poetry in the execution of his pastoral tasks. What does the framing process by means of *The Temple* entail? What, precisely, did he make, and *why* did he make it?

To accomplish this we need to choose a Herbertian perspective on *The Temple*, treating his poems as cogs that serve a specific function in a larger whole. This is why I have not chosen

[52] Bloch, 42.
[53] Cf. Bloch, 'Talking to Man' (170-230) for the biblical authority for this combination of expressive and didactic aims.
[54] Bloch, 172.
[55] White Singleton, *God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert's* Temple (CUP, 1987): pp. 2, 3.

literary theory, which traditionally takes the literary text as its object, to approach Herbert's thinking, but rather a theory of culture as cognition, by means of which the working of *The Temple* can be explained in connection to the working of the human body. This cognitive theory shares with Herbert's thinking that it can explicate the mechanisms of human life; its purpose and outline is analogous to the reflection that Herbert offers in his treatises. Cognitive theory can account for culture and art as strategies to achieve order in life, and explain the means available to Herbert's country parson, when it comes to healing and purifying those living in his community. A cognitive poetics deals with the structure of literary phenomena (cf. 1.3), thus providing a level of abstraction that can match Herbert's thinking. Having provided this structural account in the next chapter, it should be possible to re-assess Herbert's roles as poet, parson, and thinker from a modern, unified theoretical perspective, akin to Herbert's own thought.

# chapter 4

## *Explaining*

In doing we learne

Outlandish proverb 803

*4.1 Introduction*

The topic of the previous chapters has been Herbert's construction of a Christian life-system, in which the parson, his treatises, and the poems of *The Temple* had a specific part to play. Herbert aimed for a specific effect, or working, of his poems, which was to take place during the reading process. This working was connected to his self-imposed task as a parson, in which he aimed to temper, or restrain, his community, in order to keep it healthy and in harmony with God. Herbert's teaching was directed at individuals. In *The Temple* he teaches self-knowledge in a specifically poetic way: in musical forms expressive of the process of living a Christian life, during which one should aim at integrating God's Word with daily behaviour.

As a poet and priest, Herbert sought to manipulate the thoughts and actions, the minds and bodies, of those living in his community. The aim of this chapter is to offer a theory by means of which Herbert's roles as poet and priest can be explored further. This approach is derived from work done in the cognitive sciences, the now firmly established discipline to study human survival and life. Below, an explanatory framework is composed from work done in this field; this framework is presented separately from Herbert *and* systematically, starting from the basic principles of human life, thus working its way up to an empirically grounded hypothesis of the cognitive structure of poetry. This should result in a conception of *The Temple*, or rather the reading of the *Temple*, as a form of cognitive behaviour, a conception to be developed further in the next chapter. In the words of Reuven Tsur, one of the founding fathers of cognitive poetics, the main question from a cognitive perspective on religious poetry should be "how religious ideas are turned into verbal imitations of religious experience by poetic structure."[1] Herbert attempted this in *The Temple*, which appears to differ from *TTS* and *Priest* not in its contents, but in the way these contents are crafted into specific forms.

[1] Reuven Tsur, *On the Shore of Nothingness: a Study in Cognitive Poetics* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003): p. 7.

In the previous chapters, I outlined and suggested that Herbert contemplated the working of his poetry in relation to his general Christian perspective on human behaviour. In this chapter I shall attempt to establish a similar, yet modern cognitive, framework. This results in a theory of human culture as a combination of forms of cognition, in which poetry can play a distinct cognitive role. My theory of human culture and poetry as cognition is primarily based on Merlin Donald's work on this subject.[2] Donald's theory distinguishes itself from others in that it presents an all-inclusive account of human culture, in terms of distinct stages that can be discerned in the evolution of our species. His work draws on a wide variety of empirical data, gathered in several disciplines, offering a set of logical inferences that cover these data, thus theorising how the human species collectively deals with the flux of human life. As Ellen Spolsky has argued, cognitive theory tends to treat culture as dynamic practice, or group behaviour.[3] Human cultures must ensure communal survival in a hostile world; human cognition is primarily social, aimed at the regulation of interaction between individual members of a group. Donald's cognitive theory of culture works from a similar perspective. The Donaldian distinction between cognitive strategies that operate in human culture, as well as the primary role that is assigned to self-knowledge, or meta-cognition, makes it possible to view human cognition as a set of strategies, in which art and poetry are cognitive strategies of a specifiable kind, by means of which humans interact and share knowledge.

With a theory of poetry as a specific strategy of influencing the reader's mind, or 'cognitive engineering', in the terms employed by Donald,[4] a cognitive theory of the poetic process can account for the unresolved issues in the previous chapters, and explain how Herbert and his contemporary readers could conceive of poetry as a regulatory force by means of which one can achieve mental and physical health. A cognitive theory of poetry can provide insight into the healing effects of *The Temple*, its place and function in a community of minds, as well as its function as an intermediary cognitive strategy, a tempering process at work between the Christian narrative, God's Word, and the actual lives lived in Herbert's community. My cognitive theory of culture should account for poetry as a specific instrument at the disposal of a sophisticated country priest, allowing an explanation of the intended and actual impact of *The Temple* on Herbert's readers.

### *4.2 Cognition*

Research in the cognitive sciences of the last thirty years or so has brought about a view of the mind as both embodied and 'discursive'.[5] In this paradigm, the embodied mind is studied

[2] The basic theory of culture as cognition is outlined in *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[3] Spolsky, "'Making Quite Anew': Brain Modularity and Creativity," in Lisa Zunshine (ed), *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 84-102: p. 84-5.

[4] Cf. Donald, "Art and Cognitive Evolution", in *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford: OUP, 2006), pp. 3-20.

[5] Cf. David Herman, "Narrative Theory after the Second Cognitive Revolution": pp. 158-61. See also Howard

together with its physical and social surroundings, resulting in theories that describe the mind as a result of the brain developing under the guidance of *epigenetic* ('above / outside-genetic'), that is environmental, influences.[6] In this cognitive paradigm, the human mind emerges as a set of conscious and unconscious processes that occur on the "brain-body-world-nexus;"[7] the mind is seen as a combination of faculties that exist to mediate between the body and the world. This mediation serves the purpose of balancing the body with its surroundings. This balance can be achieved when the body reacts appropriately to change. The capacity to process these reactions properly is essential for survival. In Darwinian terms, the *fitness* of a given life form, its capacity to fit in its surroundings, determines its chances to survive and reproduce.[8]

The immediate effects of the surroundings on the body are registered by means of the perceptual apparatus. All the faculties that serve to negotiate the dynamics between the body and its world further are rooted in perception. Perception is the physical reaction to impulses from the surroundings or the body itself; this reaction is the result of the interplay between stimuli and innate capacities of the brain.[9] Regulating perceptual reactions is the primary function of the brain; the brain registers changes in the body, and takes appropriate measures, maintaining the homeostasis within.[10] Changes in the direct surroundings are registered when the body reacts to these changes. Perceptions can be divided in two broad classes: single stimuli and events. Whereas lower life forms process stimuli one by one, most higher life forms, mammals and primates, are able to process stimuli in patterns, which combine into events.[11] Event perception is "the ability to perceive complex, usually moving, clusters and patterns of stimuli as a unit."[12] This ability creates a huge evolutionary advantage: single clues can be perceived as markers for larger significant events, enabling organisms to better predict, and fit their behaviour to, recurring patterns in their surroundings. Brains equipped to perceive events, or *gestalts*, process information by preconceiving of patterns and matching (often incomplete) perceptual experiences to these patterns.[13]

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Gardner, *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

[6] Cf. Jean-Pierre Changeux, "The Epigenetic Variability of Memory: Brain Plasticity and Artistic Creation", in *The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives*, eds. Suzanne Nalbantian, Paul M. Matthews, and James L. McClelland (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011): pp. 55-72.

[7] W.T. Rockwell, *Neither Brain nor Ghost: A Nondualist Alternative to the Mind-Brain Identity Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005): p. 71.

[8] For the principles of evolution, cf. Boyd, *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2009): pp. 31-41; or George Williams, *Adaptation and Natural Selection* (Princeton University Press, 1966).

[9] Semir Zeki, "The Neurology of Ambiguity," in Mark Turner (ed.), *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 243-70: pp. 244-6.

[10] Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010): pp. 31-62.

[11] Cf. Mark Turner, "The Art of Compression", in Turner (ed.), *The Artful Mind* (2006): pp. 93-114.

[12] Donald 1991, 153.

[13] Cf. Zeki 2006. The study of the human perception of gestalts or patterns was one of the earliest undertakings of psychology as an independent discipline. It was started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and has been continued to this day. For an overview of gestalt psychology, see David Hothersall, *History of*

Perceptions are accompanied by emotions. Emotions play a crucial role in the interaction with one's surroundings; all operations of the mind are founded in "perceptual-emotional gestalt[s]."[14] Every conscious state we know is connected to an emotional state, which are stored and retrieved together: remembering an event includes resituating it in an emotional context.[15] Emotions are crucial for survival, in that they can break off whatever an organism is doing, and redirect its behaviour to actions more appropriate for its circumstances. This corporeal steering of the mind is crucial for survival. Computational models of the brain have shown that "interruptions of one process by another are needed where resources are limited and there are multiple goals"[16] – that is, under the conditions of life. Emotions facilitate these interruptions: they represent the organism's reactions to changes in the body and the world, and allow it to re-direct its behaviour to help increase its chances of survival.

We can conceive of cognition as the neural storage and representation of past experiences,[17] and thus the memory of interactions with one's surroundings and the effects of these interactions on the dynamics of the body.[18] Cognitive behaviour allows organisms to recognise their surroundings and react appropriately to the dynamics of their bodies and direct environment. From this perspective, cognition is closely related to what is commonly called the memory, if we understand the memory as an active and constant process that allows organisms to recognise, predict, and survive in their specific habitats. The ability to store and remember complex events is the basis of *episodic cognition*.[19] In the episodic mind, current events are recognised by means of past perceived, and remembered, events.

In ape cultures, episodic cognition has reached its peak of complexity, allowing the perception and cognition of complex social events, which serve to monitor and regulate social structure. Like all primates, humans survive in groups, in which the capacity for complex episodic cognition is needed to regulate social structure. Human cultures, however, appear to hinge on more than mere episodic minds – and this is where Merlin Donald's theory of human cognitive evolution becomes important. Donald argues that in the earliest human cultures event-perception and episodic cognition have been taken one unique and decisive step further. Whereas non-human cultures may be defined by their "shared patterns of acquired behaviour characteristic of a

*Psychology* (New York: McGraw/Hill, 2004): pp. 207-48.

[14] Terence Deacon, "The Aesthetic Faculty," in *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 21-53: p. 34.

[15] Cf. E.T. Rolls, *Emotion Explained* (New York: OUP, 2005). For the latest neuroscientific research on emotions, see for instance LeDoux and Doyère, "Emotional Memory Processing: Synaptic Connectivity", in *The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives*, eds. Suzanne Nalbantian, Paul M. Matthews, and James L. McClelland (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011): pp. 153-171.

[16] In *The Blackwell Dictionary of Cognitive Psychology*, eds. Michael W. Eysenck et al. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

[17] Donald 1991, 119-23.

[18] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999): pp. 320-1.

[19] Donald 1991, 124-161.

species,"[20] human group behaviour is fundamentally different. This difference can be retraced to our capacity to share knowledge, to cognise the world together. Donald proposes that the earliest human cultures were marked by a drastic break from other ape cultures, as humans developed the capacity not only to recognise complex patterns in their surroundings, but to *represent* these patterns by means of the body. Donald calls this first kind of corporeal representation *mimetic skill*. Mimetic representation requires a capacity for "delayed imitation."[21] It involves the use of gestures, facial expressions, and use of pitched vocal cries, to represent both the inner states of bodies and the perception of events in the surroundings. In Donald's theory, mimetic skill preceded language, probably by more than a million years.[22] This single functional adaptation, which enabled the sharing of minds, had far-reaching consequences.

> The cultural network introduces an entirely new element to human life: immersion in a cognitive collectivity, or community of mind. This is perhaps the primary source of the enormous cognitive differences between human beings and our closest genetic relatives. Monkeys and apes solve the world alone; we do not. Human culture is based on the sharing of mental representations, and we are tethered to that network. It allows us to achieve things that are far beyond the capabilities of an ape, or, for that matter, a socially isolated human brain.[23]

Mimetic skill resulted in more cohesive group-structure and more complex modes of cooperation. The representation of the memory in action patterns allowed humans to have access to all the events that could be represented by fellow-members of the group, resulting in radically new forms of social behaviour.

Donald, then, shifts the focus of cognitive theory from the 'brain-body-world-nexus' to a 'brain-culture-nexus' in order to explain the specific characteristics of human cognitive behaviour. The individual mind is "a hybrid product, partly organismic in origin, and partly ecological, shaped by a distributed network whose properties are changing."[24] From birth, human individuals are embedded in cultural collectives. Culture and the brain form one dynamic system, which Donald would call the mind, or cognition. From this perspective, Donald argues that in order to explain modern human cognitive behaviour we need to direct our attention to both the evolved properties of the brain, and the evolving characteristics of human culture; apart from accounting for a biological evolution (of body and brain), we need to describe a second and fast-

[20] Donald 1991, 9.
[21] Cf. Russell A. Barkley, "Attention-Deficity/Hyperactivity Disorder and Self-Regulation: Taking an Evolutionary Perspective on Executive Functioning", in *Handbook of Self-regulation: research, theory, and applications*, eds. Roy Baumeister and Kathleen Vohs, eds. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004): pp. 301-323.
[22] Donald proposes that mimetic cognition arrived with *Homo Erectus*, approximately 2.2 to 1.5 million years ago (Donald 2004). Other than its immediate predecessors, this species left behind a variety of relatively advanced tools, while also spreading beyond the narrow territory of earlier hominid cultures.
[23] Donald 2006, 14.
[24] Donald 2004, 35.

moving evolutionary process that took place as soon as humans acquired the capacity to share knowledge: the evolution of cognitive networks.

To accommodate such a description, Donald proposes three stages of cultural evolution that have lead to the complex cultures that we live in today. Every stage is marked by distinct improvements in the way humans represent and share knowledge; every stage marks distinct differences on both the individual and the cultural level. Whereas the first two transitions (from episodic to mimetic cognition, and from mimetic to mythic cognition) can be associated with biological adaptations, such as dramatic increases of brain size and the development of the vocal tract, the third transition (from mythic to theoretic cognition) is marked by technological advances, which allow the external storage and manipulation of knowledge. In early- modern cultures these forms of cognition would have operated simultaneously. For the sake of clarity, I will present Donald's suggested stages of human evolution separately, in the order that they have appeared in our past.

*4.3 Mimetic culture*

Donald proposes that mimetic cognition was the first significant adaptation that distinguished human cultures from their primate ancestors. It survives to this day in distinct cultural practices and modes of representation. In mimetic representation, a mode of sharing knowledge that preceded the use of language, the human body functions as a 'representational device': "[m]imetic skill or mimesis rests on the ability to produce conscious, self-initiated, representational acts that are intentional but not linguistic."[25] Mimetic representation distinguishes itself from seemingly similar forms of behaviour as imitation and mimicry, which are also based on the physical reproduction of perceived events, in that it requires the *invention* of motor-patterns for the purpose of representation. Donald lists "[tones] of voice, facial expressions, eye movements, manual signs and gestures, postural attitudes, patterned whole-body movements of various sorts, and long sequences of these elements" as typical kinds of mimetic skill.[26]

The arrival of mimetic cognition had distinct consequences for the ways in which cultures could operate; for one, it would have created rudimentary self-images of cultures, which in turn would be imposed on individual members.[27] These self-images would exist in the specific conventions of motor representation (or 'action metaphor' (cf. Donald 2004)) developed by groups in the exchange of mimetic representations, constituting rudimentary forms of play-behaviour and ritual.[28] Seeing that humans survive in groups, mimetic skill would have arisen

[25] Donald 1991, 168.
[26] Donald 1991, 168-9.
[27] Cf. Donald 1991, 162-201, Donald 2004, 44-9. See also Donald, "The definition of human nature, in the context of modern neurobiology," in D.A. Rose and S.P.R. Rose, eds. *The New Brain Sciences: Perils and Prospects*, eds. D.A. Rose and S.P.R. Rose (Cambridge: CUP, 2004): pp. 34-58.
[28] Cf. Donald 1991, 2006.

from selection pressures at the group-level: mimetic cognition served to enhance the fitness of groups rather than individuals. The mimetic mind can grasp the intention of representational acts, produced by fellow members of the group. Early humans developed a rudimentary *Theory of Mind*, the ability to deduce the intentions of others from their behaviour.[29] The advanced level of communication that mimetic skill facilitates allows a shared system in which members of a community can represent and acquire knowledge about their shared physical and social reality. The main advance, then, resulting from mimetic capacity is the improvement of social structure, as Donald indicates:

> Mimetic skill results in the sharing of knowledge, without every member of a group having to reinvent that knowledge. Although a precursor to this can be found in the accumulation of customs and skills evident in gorillas and chimpanzees, these species do not represent what they know. Mimetic skill, extended to the social realm, results in a collective conceptual 'model' of society, expressed in communal ritual and play, as well as in social structure. Social roles, in a complex society, can only be defined with reference to an implicit model of the larger society. Mimetic representations would thus be tremendously important in building a stable social structure.[30]

Based in a shared overview of one's social and physical surroundings, enabled by the representation of the memory in motor-behaviour, mimetic minds, united in mimetic cultures, could impose themselves on the world. Exercising control over one's motor behaviour, and sharing an overview of the kinds of (social) behaviour necessary for survival, introduced new possibilities: strategies of manipulating the surroundings could now be shared and practised. A logical consequence of this capacity is tool use.[31] Mimetic cognition enabled the socially coordinated creation of tools with which one could manipulate the world, effecting intentional changes for the benefit of survival.

*4.4 Mythic culture*

Mimetic culture allowed the maintenance of a rudimentary shared model of reality and a modest control over shared behaviour. In Donald's theory of cognitive evolution, humans evolved further by refining their shared model of the surroundings and themselves, while retaining the older, mimetic, cognitive strategies. The second stage of human cognitive behaviour to accommodate this need, as suggested by Donald, is *mythic cognition*.[32] This stage of human cognitive evolution gradually assimilated with episodic and mimetic cognition into a more complex memory-system,

[29] Cf. Michael Tomasello, "Human Culture in Evolutionary Perspective," in *Advances in Culture and Psychology*, ed. M. Gelfand (OUP, 2011): pp. 5-51, and also Donald 2001, 143-4, and S. Baron Cohen, *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995).
[30] Donald 1991, 173.
[31] Donald 1991, 179, 193.
[32] Cf. Donald 1991, 201-268.

in which knowledge could be shared by means of language.[33] Whereas mimetic cultures were tied in their operations to the corporeal re-enactment of events, mythic cultures achieved more advanced shared models of reality, creating more complex and efficient systems of representation, which were founded on the ability to cross-reference between events, making it possible to connect past, present and future 'episodes' in one single representative act: storytelling.

The most prominent feature of mythic cultures is speech; in Donald's theory, language arose from selection pressures on group level.[34] The 'arrival' of language greatly increased the range of what could be represented: "Where mimetic representation was limited to concrete episodes, metaphorical thought could compare across episodes, deriving general principles and extracting thematic content."[35] In mythic culture, speech is the instrument by means of which members of a group can communicate their past experiences, as well as future plans. According to Donald, language started in mimetic conventions, in the shared (ritualistic) representation of concrete events, resulting in shared conceptual frameworks by means of which all the knowledge in a given group could be re-enacted. Like mimetic representation, language is an act of intentional cognitive behaviour, of selecting and representing past remembered events, by inventing patterns to represent these events.

In language, "a way of connecting sound and meaning" (vii), messages are communicated, while social relations are negotiated.[36] Language-use thus serves two main purposes at the same time: assigning meaning to reality communally, and negotiating the distributed cognitive network in which meaning is shared and produced. In adhering to language as a "consensual expressive system" (278) based in interaction and cultural codes, fulfilling the same basic cognitive needs as mimetic representation, Donald rejects the idea of a Chomskian Universal Grammar, which retraces the universal, cross-cultural, patterns of language to a specific part or 'module' in the brain.[37] Instead, Donald proposes to explain the patterns found in language-use from the characteristics of event-perception:

> The parts of speech and the rules by which they are governed seem to emerge naturally from the progressive differentiation, or parsing, of event perceptions. In this case, we can say that language begins by simply putting labels on specific aspects of an episodic perception.[38]

[33] Donald associates the transition to this stage with the transition from *Erectus*- to *Sapiens*- cultures, about 2-300,000 years ago.
[34] Donald 1991, 201-17.
[35] Donald 1991, 215.
[36] Cf. Stephen Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007).
[37] Donald 2001, 274-86. On the whole, Donald rejects the idea of modules in the working of the mind, explored by Chomsky and Fodor. Cf. Fodor's *The Modularity of Mind* (1983), a position going back to the hypothesising of Broca and Wernicke. Cf. Stephen Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), for a succinct account and defence of this position.
[38] Donald 2001, 282.

This view of language is the logical consequence of an evolutionary, cumulative, account of human culture. Mythic culture superseded mimetic and episodic cultures. Language, or conceptual thought, thus builds on the mechanisms involved in the perception and representation of events.[39]

According to Donald, the natural outcome of mythic cultures, and the social consequence of language, is *myth*, a shared metaphorical framework in which the members of the group use language to represent their shared world. Myth involves an overriding narrative of the social group and its relation to its surroundings, a more refined extension of the rudimentary self-image established in rituals and other mimetic conventions: it covers past, present and future of a given culture by means of stories. Within the boundaries of an overriding myth, smaller narratives could be invented to give meaning to experience. Narratives, then, are refined forms of mimetic representation. Narration is the linguistic representation of events,[40] and the 'natural' full-grown application of speech.

Donald associates mythic cultures and the arrival of shared narratives with the rise of religion. In mythic culture, religion is the combination of a shared meta-narrative, concerned with group-identity, and mimetic practices as dance, music and ritual. In mythic religions, conventionalised motor behaviour serves the purpose of supporting meta-narratives. By proposing that religion arose from selection-pressures at the group level, Donald vindicates an early sociological insight, first formulated by Emile Durkheim: "Socio-structurally religion had a fundamental role: maintaining the social system by strengthening the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which its god is the figurative representation."[41] From this perspective, religion marked a distinct evolutionary, social advantage, somewhere in the evolution of the human species.[42] The maintenance of a given myth, an accurate narrative for a specific community and the world in which it survived, would usually involve supernatural actors to explain the working of nature.[43] Donald's sense of myth is that it "permeates and regulates daily life, channels perceptions, determines the significance of every object and event in life;" "[m]yth governs the collective mind."[44] In mythic cultures, then, every possibly significant event is ultimately interpreted in terms of meta-narratives, and connected to the supernatural actors that feature in those narratives.

[39] Cf. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner *The Way we Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); and Turner, "The Art of Compression," in Turner (2006): pp. 93-114.

[40] Cf. Boyd 2009, 159-76.

[41] Cf. Lawson and McCauley, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), p. 49.

[42] In contrast to this view, religion is often viewed as a by-product of evolution (as is art), see for instance Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books / Harper Collins, 2001).

[43] For similar perspectives on the regulatory function of religion, cf. *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002). David Sloan Wilson describes religion as a form of group-selection, and a means to enhance social cohesion. See also A.B. Newberg, E. D'Aquili, and V. Rause, *Why God won't go away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001). This study explores the neurology of religious experience, arguing that religion is rooted in the brain. The authors found that religious behaviour favourably affects brain function.

[44] Donald 1991, 215, 268.

Whereas mimetic cognition only serves the representation of concrete events, mythic acts of recognition are fundamentally separated from the events that they represent, thus enabling the creation of larger connections between separate events. Saussure showed, and Donald thinks along these lines, that language is a relational, arbitrary system, dependent on communications between brains. Donald's theory affirms that language is based in interaction.[45] The meaning of concepts depends on this interaction: it depends on the arbitrary relations between concepts, established by common practice of convention. The more accurate the interpretation of events, the bigger the chances of survival of a given group. In mythic culture, the members of a community of minds decide in which meta-narrative historical accounts can be generated. The community decides on the meaning of life-events by inventing and preferring one meta-narrative over the other.

*4.5 Theoretic culture*

The third and final transition in the evolution of human culture, proposed by Donald, from mythic to *theoretic* culture, was driven by technological developments, shifting the burden of sharing knowledge to sites outside the brain, freed from the limitations of the body.[46] Theoretic culture is marked by "visuographic invention, or the symbolic use of graphic devices."[47] Donald thus assigns central importance to the use of artefacts in this third, theoretic stage. In mimetic and mythic cultures, artefacts, tools, were already applied to cultivate the world; in theoretic cultures, however, artefacts served an altogether new purpose: as devices for representation.[48]

The most obvious development that marks the transition from mythic to theoretic culture is that from speaking to writing. Theoretic culture involves reading, connecting the brain to knowledge stored in artefacts: "Reading is a cognitive state whereby the biological mind is brought temporarily under the complete dominance of an ESSS [External Symbolic Storage System] device. The mind is literally 'played' by the book, moved into a state crafted by the author."[49] Knowledge can thus be accessed and re-activated by any other mind with the appropriate capacity and training to decipher the code inscribed on the artefact. The reading mind functions as a short-term working memory, generating the (long-term) knowledge that is stored in the memory-

[45] For a more elaborate defence of this position, cf. Michael Tomasello, *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Tomasello positions his theory against the Universal Grammar-approaches in the work of Pinker, Fodor, and Chomsky.

[46] For the full description of this stage, cf. Donald 1991, 269-360.

[47] Donald 1991, 275. Donald locates the beginning of full-fledged theoretic culture in Ancient Greece, approximately from 700 BC onwards (cf. 340-4), but theoretic culture starts much earlier, in the Paleolithic (3-40,000 years before now).

[48] Steven Mithen has described this development as the attainment of 'cognitive fluidity', the cognitive breakthrough for modern humans, by means of which 'technical intelligence', knowledge of the making of artefacts, can be applied to 'social' and 'natural history' intelligence, knowledge of the social and physical surroundings. Cf. Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*. *A Search for the Origins of Art, Religion and Science* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996).

[49] Donald 1991, 324.

tools produced in theoretic cultures.[50] From this perspective, then, reading is a form of cognitive behaviour, a communication process between author and reader, mediated by means of tools.

Theoretic culture is not only marked by a quantitative improvement of knowledge-storing-potential, but also by qualitative changes in the kinds of knowledge that can be produced. As Steven Mithen has noted, artefacts are not "simply products or representations of our inner thoughts. They play an essential role in formulating, manipulating and sharing those thoughts."[51] The shared knowledge of mythic cultures was restricted to the conceptual frameworks of the narratives in use. Theoretic culture, apart from maintaining episodic, mimetic, and mythic cognitive strategies, enables 'abstract visualisation', which is, in short, "a picture of a concept."[52] In his discussion of graphic representation, David Staley defines abstract visualisation as "any graphic form which organizes meaningful information in multidimensional spatial form" – examples include "maps, diagrams, panoramas, schematics, charts, and time-series graphs" (3), representing a fundamentally different kind of cognition than the use of narratives.[53] By visualising concepts by means of artefacts, indicating the (graphic) *structure*, rather than the meaning, of represented events, theoretic cognition allows that the shared memory system be employed to speculate on structural relations between phenomena or events, thus fine-tuning the ability to explain the past and predict the future.[54] Aimed at the discovery of the laws, the structure, of events, theoretic cognition lies at the basis of science and speculative knowledge.[55]

*4.6 Meta-cognition*

Human cognition is as much directed at itself as at the world; every cognitive act is surveyed and controlled – 'cognised' in itself. Donald calls this self-reflective surveying 'meta-cognition.'[56] In meta-cognitive behaviour, the event that is represented is cognition itself. In the human mind, meta-cognition is a precondition for cognitive behaviour; without an internal control-system the mind cannot function properly.[57] In order to select and combine parts of the memory for the purpose of representation, either to communicate or to make sense of experience, agents require an overview of their memories. Managing this overview is meta-cognitive, or meta-conscious,

[50] A Donaldian theory of reading can account for its cognitive function. The actual brain-activity involved is not its primary object. For the latest research on the neuroscience of reading, cf. *The Neural Basis of Reading*, eds. Piers Cornelissen, Peter C. Hansen, and Morten Kringelbach (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

[51] Steven Mithen, "The Evolution of Imagination: An Archeological Perspective" in *SubStance* 30 (2001), 28-54: p. 50.

[52] David J. Staley, *Computers, Visualization, and History: How New Technology Will Transform Our Understanding of the Past* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003): p. 13.

[53] Cf. Staley, 13-57.

[54] Cf. Barend van Heusden, "Semiotic Cognition and the Logic of Culture," in *Pragmatics & Cognition* 17:3 (2009): pp. 611-27.

[55] Cf. Merlin Donald, "Memory Palaces: The Revolutionary Function of Libraries", in *Queen's Quarterly* 108/4 (Winter 2001): pp. 559-572. See also Donald 1991: pp. 275-308, and Staley 2003: p. 4.

[56] Cf. Donald 2006.

[57] Donald 1991, 173-7.

behaviour. Meta-cognition corresponds to *self-consciousness* (Donald 2001); both terms denote the capacity to monitor one's cognitive processes.[58] The human 'self' is a built-in, crucial part of cognition;[59] self-consciousness is a natural property of our cognitive architecture.[60] People have "a sense of self in the act of knowing"; indeed, "[t]here is no consciousness that is not self-consciousness."[61] Mimetic cognition, for instance, the most rudimentary form of human cognition that Donald describes, is "the direct result of consciously examining our own embodiment, of the brain using its body as a reduplicative device."[62]

The self can be made the object of representation. Meta-cognitive behaviour, representations in which the cognitive process itself is the main aim of representation, can occur mimetically, mythically, and theoretically.[63] In mimetic meta-cognition, (self-) knowledge is represented and cognised in the form of concrete events. Donald associates this type of meta-cognitive behaviour with our modern conception of art. In mimetic meta-cognition, artefacts can be employed to mediate the meta-cognitive event: in most cases artists resort to artefacts to enact meta-cognition – notable exceptions are art forms as mime and dance, which make use of the body as artefact. [64] When performing its meta-representative function, art depends on the recognition of representations *as* representations.[65] Brian Boyd has theorised that art finds its origin in the communal reflection on representations, essential in maintaining cohesion and structure in social life. During this communal reflection, shared attention from participants is crucial.[66] This ritualistic aspect of art, in Boyd's and Deacon's theories, finds its origins in communal group-defining behaviour, and is related to the common association of art with (cognitive) play. By means of play-behaviour, humans calibrate their actions to one another, establishing conventions, while practising to share their attention, a precondition for the sharing of knowledge, for longer periods of time. Following the logic of Donald's theory, mythic meta-cognition takes place in stories that take the cultures in which they arise as their object: typical examples would be ideologies and religious meta-narratives. Theoretic meta-cognition should involve the *analysis* of culture: cognitive science can serve as an example here.

Meta-cognition is part of human lives from the very beginning. The archetype of shared cognitive behaviour, and the basis of human interaction, as Ellen Dissanayake has suggested, lies in mother-

[58] Donald 2001, 269-71. Terms like meta-consciousness or meta-representation are also in use. Cf. William Frawley, *Vygotsky and Cognitive Science: Language and the Unification of the Social and Computational Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997): pp. 160-6, and Van Heusden 2009.
[59] Cf. Barend van Heusden, "Semiosis, art, and literature," in *Semiotica* 165 – 1 / 4 (2007): pp. 133–47.
[60] Donald 2001, 35-9.
[61] Damasio 1999, 9, 20.
[62] Donald 2006, 16.
[63] Cf. Van Heusden 2009.
[64] Cf. Donald 2006.
[65] Boyd 2009, 139-13, and Deacon 2006, 22.
[66] Boyd 2009, 99-109.

child relationships, in which shared attention is maintained by means of facial expressions, gestures, and sound patterns: the kind of motor behaviour that Donald associates with mimetic cognition. Infants and their mothers show this behaviour in the establishment of a mutual bond. This bond ensures that the mind develops, that the child learns, in *equilibrium*[67] with its (cognitive) surroundings: this balance must exist interpersonally first, before it can be internalised, and made 'one's own' in relatively stable patterns of self-representation. Improvised reactive imitation, the attunement of representational patterns, is crucial in this process.[68] While perceiving emotional display in other human beings, the brain reorganises itself in ways that suggest that one pretends to experience these emotions.[69] In its function (a shared activity, requiring the attention of at least two parties) and in its execution (by means of mimetic representation) the initial tuning of representational activity between mother and infant would seem to lie at the basis of more complex forms of communal mimetic cognitive behaviour, such as cognitive play, ritual, and the arts.

From birth onwards, then, the self develops in social interaction; Donald claims that "[every] function in a child's development thus appears twice: first interpersonally, then intrapersonally."[70] A requirement for the internalisation of self-consciousness is that it is enacted interpersonally first.[71] Self-knowledge depends on the ability to distance oneself from one's own mind, taking the perspective of 'the other' to reflect on one's own cognitive behaviour. Meta-cognition is the "transference from other-regulation to self-regulation;"[72] one learns to control one's own mind by internalising early social relations. In this respect, meta-cognition is closely related to, and dependent on, Theory of Mind, the capacity to reflect on the minds and behaviours of others.[73]

If we accept that the human mind 'takes place' at the sites where brains meet, a discussion of the individual mind, of 'selves', becomes problematic. From a Donaldian perspective, the human self is a cognitive activity. Individuality, the experience of selfhood, is a required activity, executed to monitor the memory and generate representations. The self as activity takes place in interaction with the community. Individual human beings survive by the grace of being part of a network of distributed cognition, while being constantly confronted with change in their own

[67] The concept is derived from Jean Piaget's theory of child development, in which equilibrium denotes the balance between the structure of the developing mind and its surroundings. See Jean Piaget, *The Construction of Reality in the Child* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954).

[68] Cf. Ellen Dissanayake, *Art and Intimacy: How the arts began* (Seattle, WA: The University of Washington Press, 2000).

[69] Cf. Damasio 1999, 280-3, and G. Rizzolatti and C. Sinigaglia, *Mirrors in the Brain: How we Share our Actions and Emotions* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

[70] Donald 2001, 251.

[71] Donald 2001, 250-1. See also Frawley 1997. For the interdependence of social behaviour and active self-control, see Kathleen Vohs and Natalie Ciarocco, "Interpersonal Functioning Requires Self-Regulation", in the *Handbook of Self-Regulation: Research Theory and Applications*, eds. Roy Baumeister and Kathleen Vohs (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004): pp. 392-407.

[72] Papaleontiou-Louca, Eleonora. *Metacognition and Theory of Mind* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): p. 10.

[73] Cf. Frawley, 265-9.

lives. Donald has noted the strain on the "individual-conscious-mind-in-culture", which results from the interdependence of human brains and the cultural matrices that structure cognition.[74] The dynamics between individual existence and the community marks the basic tension of human existence. The individual mind is inherently confused, as one's recognition of the surroundings and what one knows of, shared with others about, those surroundings do not quite match; shared knowledge is relatively stable compared to the dynamics of experience.[75]

In each stage of human cognition, the confusion that lies at the basis of the cognitive process is solved in different ways. In mimetic culture, individuals match corporeal, mimetic representational events with perceived events. In mythic culture, mimetic transformations are joined with cultural narratives, by means of which individuals match experience to the categories that are relevant to their lives. This results in a constant expansion of the meanings available in one's system of shared knowledge; the built-in distance and confusion in human cognitive processing is the driving force behind language-evolution.[76] In theoretic culture, the narratives and transformations of mythic and mimetic representation are joined by visuographic means of representation. The external storage of shared knowledge allows that individuals can access relevant knowledge at any point when the need arises. In theoretic culture, knowledge need not be remembered: one only needs to know where it can be found an retrieved. By means of the schematised representation that the theoretic system allows, a perceived change in the surroundings is typically interpreted as superficial, an apparent change in line with what one knows about the 'deep-structure' of these events.[77]

*4.7 Mimetic meta-cognitive tool use*

In order to represent cognition mimetically one often has to resort to using artefacts, or tools. In mimetic meta-cognition, shaped in concrete events, artefacts serve as extensions of the body, to function as representational devices. A cognitive theory of culture, then, as Spolsky mentions, leads to a view of art as "a kind of mental tool use". Whereas basic, cognitive, tools are used to manipulate the environment, artistic, meta-cognitive, tools serve to manipulate minds: "[w]orks of art (…) are part of the dynamic by which a culture keeps its balance, or finds a new stability, in the face of the more or less permanent stream of threats and crises that are the human condition."[78] From this perspective, the primary purpose of art is to increase the balance in the cultures in which it is used, thus facilitating social homeostasis. This social balance, in turn, improves the chances of survival.

[74] Donald 2001, 285-7.
[75] Cf Van Heusden 2009.
[76] Fauconnier and Turner have described this process as 'conceptual blending', in which, in short, known 'input spaces' are projected onto one another, to create new 'blended' concepts.
[77] Cf. Van Heusden 2009.
[78] Ellen Spolsky, *Satisfying Skepticism: Embodied Knowledge in the Early Modern World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001): pp. 1, 5.

Humans use tools to manipulate the world: these tools serve as intervening objects between agents and their surroundings. As a form of social tool use, art performs a similar function in the social surroundings. Below, I propose to consider the basic characteristics of tool-use first, which can then serve to explore the features of mimetic meta-cognitive manipulation. For a basic outline of tool use we can refer to Lakoff and Johnson, in their account of the structure of 'direct manipulation', in which an agent directs his or her energy at a patient, aiming to effectuate a change in that patient.[79]

> The agent has as a goal some change of state in the patient.
> The change of state is physical.
> The agent has a 'plan' for carrying out this goal.
> The plan requires the agent's use of a motor program.
> The agent is in control of that motor program.
> The agent is primarily responsible for carrying out the plan
> The agent is the energy source (i.e., the agent is directing his energies toward the patient), and the patient is the energy goal (i.e., the change in the patient is due to an external source of energy).
> The agent touches the patient either with his body or an instrument (i.e. there is a spatiotemporal overlap between what the agent does and the change in the patient).
> The agent successfully carries out the plan.
> The change in the patient is perceptible.
> The agent monitors the change in the patient through sensory perception.
> There is a single specific agent and a single specific patient.[80]

As this schedule makes clear, direct manipulation of the physical environment by means of a tool is intentional behaviour, performed for the purpose of survival. 'Direct manipulation' can occur in mimetic, mythic, and theoretic cultures. The agent's 'plan' before proceeding to the actual process of manipulation is the (often mental) representation of this process, which requires a preconceived model of one's role as an agent, and the kind of change one wishes to effect. In the case of basic tool use, manipulation of the surroundings is carried out by means of a 'motor program': the body intervenes in its environment. Meta-cognition is required here to control this motor-behaviour; the manipulation of the memory allows the intentional creation of tools. The 'spatiotemporal overlap' is necessary as the agent and the patient have to become momentarily one to allow the process of direct manipulation to take place. This merging of agent and patient allows the transfer of energy from one to the other. To achieve all this the agent invests energy, which is eventually transferred to the patient.

[79] It should be noted that in Lakoff and Johnson's argument, this schema is intended to represent a prototype: the corporeal basis of the concept 'Direct Manipulation'. In my comparison, I use this prototype to indicate the basic structure of tool-use.

[80] Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 70-1.

We can assume that art as a complex form of tool use follows this rudimentary scheme in its own specific and complex realisation. With regard to art as mimetic meta-cognition, Donald proposes that (1) "Art should be regarded as a specific kind of *cognitive engineering*. As a first principle, art is an activity *intended to influence the minds of an audience*." (2) "Art is always created in the context of *distributed cognition*." (3)"Art is *constructivist* in nature, aimed at the deliberate refinement and elaboration of mental models and worldviews." (4) "Art is self-reflective. The artistic object compels reflection on the very process that created it – that is, on the mind of the artist, and thus of the society from which the artist emerged." (5) "Art is a *technology-driven* aspect of cognition" and "technology can actually alter the properties of the distributed cognitive systems of society and change the nature of the cognitive work done." (6) "[S]uch innovations as writing systems, new graphic media, and external memory systems can change the kind of art, and the range of worldviews, that are possible *because they influence memory itself, through both the media of storage and the pathways of retrieval*."[81]

Comparing Donald's statements to the basic outline of tool use, we can see that art performs its function, when it achieves 'some change of state in the patient'. The patient in this case is not an object, but the recipient of art: an 'open' mind. The 'agent' is the artist, the creator of the artefact. The artist needs a (meta-meta-cognitive) 'plan' before creating his tool; he creates the artefact according to this plan. This mental preconception of the artefact and its working need not necessarily be sharp or fixed; however, it guides the artist during the construction of the artefact. The tool (the artefact, the object) is instrumental; it is subservient to the mental manipulation of the recipient. Once in use, the artefact becomes part of culture; it becomes a site where knowledge is shared, manipulated and communicated.

Once the artefact assumes its function it achieves an 'overlap' between the agent and the patient. In the case of art, this overlap is not spatiotemporal, as the agent and the patient do not need to be, and in practice are often not, present at the same place and time. Place and time, however, are restricted, as the manipulation by means of the artefact can only occur in a shared system of *distributed cognition*: the meta-cognitive experience connected to it is bound to the space and time in which this cognitive context is still valid as a shared model of reality. Reflections on the *technique* that was used to create the artefact is always part of the process of art, as it can serve to interpret the intentions of the artist – the original 'plan' that informed it. Focusing on the process of creation provides the setting in which the artefact can generate what it was designed to achieve; re-creation (itself a meta-cognitive skill) is inseparable from the artistic experience.

During the process of art, recipients generate art by means of the artefact. During art, recipients (re-)construct the self-experience of the artist, oscillating between this construction and a reflective act in which one's own cognitive behaviour, one's construction of 'the world', is reviewed. In practice, this oscillation is one unified process: mimetic meta-cognition. By means of

[81] Donald 2006, 5, 6.

the artefact, the cognitive process is thus momentarily 'shared', that is, the recipient constructs a shared position, by means of which self-reflection is intensified. These are the basic dynamics of mimetic meta-cognition; during this self-made process the recipient can generate self-knowledge.

*4.8 Poetry as cognition*

If poetry is a form of art, and it is usually assumed that it is, the cognitive structure of artistic, mimetic meta-cognitive, representation should also apply to poetry, which distinguishes itself by the specific media in which this structure is realised. Readers are the recipients and re-creators of poetry; in line with a cognitive theory of culture, their mimetic meta-cognitive behaviour when processing the words on the page should underlie at least part of what is commonly understood by 'poetry'.[82] This behaviour should be distinguished from the poetic artefact itself. As a tool that is a put to use, the written words require a reading mind for it to generate what it has in store. When read (or when read aloud), poetry occurs as a 'singular', one-off event; it is 'reinvented', recreated, with each reading;[83] each reading results in a new poem. While constructing this process, the reader must assume that this representation is in line with the author's intentions:[84] reconstructing and identifying with these intentions is crucial if one is to use the poetic tool appropriately. Thinking along with the poet, imagining the creative process and what has come out of it, serves the purpose of self-reflection – one identifies with the author, while reconstructing the poetic event. As a form of mimetic self-knowledge, then, poetry can serve to strengthen a shared memory-system. By means of poetry individual minds in culture are brought together; by means of a shared reflection on mental tool use, self-knowledge is calibrated between minds and, both on the individual and the social level, reinforced, thus enhancing the stability and survival chances of cultures in which poetry is in use.

Representing self-knowledge, the tension inherent to the processes that take place at the 'brain-culture-nexus', the individual mind surviving in a cognitive collective, is inevitably part of

[82] It should be clear that in this chapter I do not aim to define art and poetry: instead, I aim to picture the cognitive structures that shape the processes denoted by these terms. Donald has not written extensively on lyric poetry, indicating that he categorises it as a kind of linguistic / mythic representation (Donald 2006, 9). Following the logic of his theory, however, poetry ought to be a combination of mimesis and myth – that is, of concrete forms / event and language.

[83] For a similar argument, see Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London / New York: Routledge, 2004).

[84] Cf. Norman Holland, *The Brain of Robert Frost: A Cognitive Approach to Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1988). Rather than interpreting literary texts, Holland attempted to reconstruct what readers did with texts. Holland's perspective on poetry as indirect intentional communication goes against a traditional commonplace, still deemed valid today, the 'Intentional Fallacy', formulated in the 1950s by Wimsatt and Beardsley, later adopted by mainstream traditional criticism. The critical rejection of authorial intention was reinforced by such seminal (post-) structuralist texts as Roland Barthes' 'The Death of the Author', which signalled a shift away from the author as unique agent and point of departure for the study of text, and Michel Foucault's 'What is an Author?', which proposes to view the author as a principle of classification that organises discourse. Both Barthes and Foucault assumed that discourse shapes the mind, and that the intentions of those using discourse are subservient, or irrelevant, to the dynamics of language.

what is represented in poetry and literature.[85] From a different, reader-response perspective, the function of this poetic process has been described by Norman Holland: "a reader responds to a literary work by assimilating it to his own psychological process, that is to his search for successful solutions within his identity theme to the multiple demands, both inner and outer, on his ego."[86] From a Donaldian perspective, Holland's description seems accurate. In poetry, readers create a psychological process, by means of which they can self-reflect. This process serves to control cognition, which is the individual combining of collective constructions and private experience, thus producing temporary solutions to cope with the dynamics of the body ('inner') and the physical and social surroundings ('outer'). Without this control, human cognition is impossible. The 'self', meta-cognition, is a built-in feature of the cognitive process. By means of poetry readers can 'tune', or calibrate, this meta-cognitive process to that constructed during the reading process, thus being guided by the poet to a stronger self-image.

If poetry is a form of art, how is it different from other forms of art? The answer does not lie in the cognitive processes that can be generated in poetry, but in the means as to how this is achieved. The poet offers two separate cognitive processes that need to be performed simultaneously: mimetic and mythic cognition. Poetry, or literature rather, can be distinguished from other forms of art by this unique combination. Mythic cognition is inevitably tied to the use of (written) language, while mimesis serves to give shape to it. In poetry, the concrete perceivable qualities of language, its sounds, rhythms and outward appearances – in short, the features that would stand out in mimetic interaction – are exploited as organising principles.[87] This can be achieved in controlled 'musical' speech, or by means of an artefact. Whereas spoken poetry must necessarily be organised in auditory patterns,[88] the use of a graphic or external artefact adds the possibility of exploiting the visual appearance of language. In cognitive terms, the poetic event consists of a perceptual and / or mimetic organisation of mythic cognitive behaviour. When generated by means of an artefact (the words on the page), a poem is also unmistakably theoretic; it is mediated by an external artefact designed and used for this purpose. Readers, making use of

[85] Cf. Van Heusden, "Estrangement and the representation of life in art," in *Ostrannenie*, ed. A van den Oever (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010):157-64. This tension in poetry has often been recognised, most notably in formalist criticism of the early twentieth century. William Empson in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) argued that verbal ambiguity can reflect a confused state of mind in the author. In his preface, Empson remarks that 'good' poetry achieves to "externalise the conflicts of an individual." (ix) Victor Shklovsky, in "Art as Technique" (1917), explores the notion of *ostranenie*, usually translated as *defamiliarisation* or *estrangement*, as a principle of art. This estrangement was to be achieved by prolonging the process of perceiving a depicted object, by making forms 'strange'.

[86] Norman Holland, *5 Readers Reading*. New Haven: Yale University Press (1975): p. 209.

[87] Cf. Patrick Colm Hogan, "Literary Universals", in *Poetics Today* 18 (1997): pp. 223-49. Colm Hogan lists line lengths of 5-9 words, the use of imagery, and the exploitation of acoustic qualities of language as 'literary universals' – dominant cross-cultural traits of poetry.

[88] In lyric poetry, this combination is most obvious, having arisen from settings to music. Cf. David Lindley, *Lyric* (London: Methuen, 1985).

the artefact to generate self-knowledge, are thus required to perform three distinctly different, yet coexistent, cognitive operations at the same time: identifying with the intentions of authors to guide the re-creation of art as social 'shared memory tools' [theoretic meta-meta-cognition], the organising of language in mimetic patterns [mimetic meta-cognition], and the processing of language itself [mythic cognition].

In poetry, then, the 'tuning' of the reader occurs by identifying with several distinct roles. Readers tune themselves to the author, identifying with the making and using of tools, to the poetic voice, expressed through the shape of the poems, and to the persona that is represented in language. In lyric poetry, as in the early reception of Herbert's *Temple*, the mimetic organisation of language, its 'shaping voice', has traditionally been associated with music.[89] Recent cognitive research shows that, whereas language is primarily tied to mythic cognition, the reception of music seems to tend to the mimetic. To illustrate this, Ole Kühl has described musical meaning as a "proto-concept", "a preverbal unified whole, sensed rather than thought."[90] This pre-lingual characteristic can be retraced to the central role of music in early interaction between mother and infant, which forms the basis of social behaviour later in life. From the beginning, the interaction between mother and child is primarily rhythmic, accompanied by concrete sound-patterns. From birth onwards, infants attune motor and sound patterns with their parents, in order to interact and establish a social bond.[91] The strength of this union is essential for the later social development of the child.[92] Ellen Dissanyake has suggested that this first 'attunement' of behaviour, consisting of early attempts at (self-) representation, plays a major role in the regulation of change, experienced as emotions, and that it is precisely this interaction which lies at the basis of artistic representation.[93]

Donald's theory seems to vindicate this suggestion. He proposes that music is tied to ritual and "mass emotion," moving the emotions differently than could be achieved by language alone. Rudimentary forms of music would have existed in mimetic culture, as "series of variations on existing vocal cries, with a very important improvisation: voluntary modulation."[94] The 'baby-talk', which seems to be ingrained in motherly reactions to infants, is framed in Donaldian mimetic behaviour: it features exaggerated facial expressions, motor behaviour, and pronounced pitch modalities, when using language. In this manner, a temporal union and 'emotional attunement' is

[89] Cf. Lindley.
[90] Kühl, *Musical Semantics*. European Semiotics (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007): p. 49.
[91] Cf. Colwyn Trevarthen, "Musicality and the intrinsic motivic pulse: Evidence from human psychobiology and infant communication", in *Musicæ Scientiæ* Special Issue (1999-2000): pp. 155-215, and Trevarthen, "Origins of musical identity: Evidence from infancy for musical social Awareness", in *Musical Identities*, eds. R.A.R. MacDonald, D.J. Hargreaves, and D. Miell (Oxford: OUP, 2002): pp. 21-38.
[92] Cf. John Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).
[93] Ellen Dissanayake, "Antecedents of the temporal arts in early mother-infant communication," In *The Origins of Music* , eds. N. Wallin, B. Merker, and S. Brown (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000): pp. 389-410.
[94] Donald 1991, 40, 41.

achieved between mother and child, solidifying the self-image of the developing infant.[95] Music thus shapes social interaction, possibly having played a crucial part in early humanoid evolution to this purpose.[96] Music enhances social coherence, by the temporal synchronisation of emotions.[97] As a form of mimetic representation, music can temporarily effectuate 'muscular bonding' (vi), in shared corporeal representational activity.[98]

Formalised music builds on these characteristics and functions of early mother-infant-interaction. Music is "a complex, highly structured, acoustic material that unfolds over time"; it consists of sets of complex representational events, requiring distinct memory skills: "the capacity to remember a wide range of features, from the pitch of tones and musical timbres to their rhythmic and metric patterns."[99] Although music and language make use of similar neural mechanisms, rhythm and metre are fundamental to music, while relatively unimportant in language-use.[100] Musical cognition, or 'musical memory' involves an intensified experience of emotions, possibly related to the tight connection between music and autobiographical memory[101] – a connection framed in the concrete, musical, characteristics of daily social interaction.

These characteristics and functions can also be at work in (lyric) poetry: in this genre, the 'muscular bonding' and intensified shared regulation of emotions, inherent to musical practice, are imposed on language-use. This ties in with the long-standing critical conviction that literature is a vehicle to convey personal emotion. A particularly influential and clear formulation of this conviction can be found in T.S. Eliot's early description of the 'objective correlative'. By means of this principle Eliot sought to clarify the occurrence of strong emotions in recipients of art and poetry. Comparing and contrasting this definition to a cognitive perspective on art may serve to enlighten the place of the emotions in a cognitive theory of poetry, thus rounding off this section.

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately invoked.[102]

[95] Cf. D. Miall and Dissanayake, "The Poetics of Babytalk," in *Human Nature* 14.4 (2003): pp. 337-64.

[96] Cf. Stephen Mithen, *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind, and Body* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 2005). Mithen hypothesises that music originated as a kind of prelinguistic cognitive engineering in Neanderthal cultures, which share a common ancestry with *sapiens*.

[97] Cf. Brown, "Evolutionary Models of Music: From sexual selection to group selection." *Perspectives in Ethology* 13: *Evolution, Culture, and Behaviour*, eds. N.S. Thompson and F. Tonneau (New York: Plenum, 2000): pp. 221-281.

[98] Cf. William H. MacNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[99] Barbara Tillmann, Isabelle Peretz, and Séverine Samson, "Neurocognitive Approaches to Memory in Music: Music Is Memory", in *The Memory Process: Neuroscientific and Humanistic Perspectives*, eds. Suzanne Nalbantian, eds. Paul M. Matthews, and James L. McClelland (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 377-394: p. 377.

[100] A.D. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain* (New York: OUP, 2008): p. 404.

[101] Tillmann et al. 2011, 385-9.

[102] Eliot, "Hamlet", *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 141-6: p. 145.

If emotion is the representation of bodily states, the internal dynamics of the body as it maintains its balance and reacts to whatever perception 'takes in',[103] we can rephrase Eliot's early insight in terms of cognitive behaviour. Earlier in this chapter, we conceived of emotions as body-induced mechanisms that break off and redirect the courses of cognitive behaviour. Emotions themselves can also be the object of representation: a theoretic analytical account would seek to establish the underlying rules in which emotions occur, the brain processes involved, the function of emotions in relation to other mental faculties, in short: the structure of processes in which emotions take part. A mythic account would seek to address the meaning of emotions: aiming to define them and interpret the place of emotions by fitting them into the narratives that are in use at a particular time and place. A mimetic account, and here we arrive at Eliot's 'objective correlative', would seek to gather means to represent the emotions as they occur in experience, while reflecting on this process at the same time. Eliot claims, and this seems accurate, that is not possible to represent emotions 'as such' in art. However, the cognitive processes which *can* be represented are inevitably tied to a conscious 'self'. For each reader, the cognitive processes that are being constructed will relate to memories of this self, and to the emotional states that co-occurred with the (meta-) cognitive events: the 'formulas' of particular emotions are cognitive events.

*4.9 'In doing we learne'*

In this chapter, cognition has come to denote the interaction between organisms and their surroundings, enabling these organisms to survive. Human cognitive behaviour is situated in the embodied mind: this is the place where the individual brain and culture can meet in constant interaction. Human life is self-controlled, as it interacts with others. The internalisation of social interaction, the faculty by means of which one can monitor one's own cognitive processing, is also known as meta-cognition or self-consciousness. From birth onwards, a rudimentary self-image develops, as the infant gradually learns to separate its body from the physical and social surroundings; developing humans learn to view their own embodiment from the position of 'the other', internalising the patterns of their first social interactions. While maturing, the mind develops more complex strategies to cognise itself and the world; during human development, the brain matures in interaction with culture, while culture develops, being continually 'fed' by brains. Donald's theory asserts that modern human culture is founded on three kinds of cognitive interaction between individuals: mimetic cognition, in which the body is employed as a representational device, mythic cognition, which employs language to conceptualise, and theoretic cognition, in which graphic symbols are used to analyse the structure of objects and events.

Cognition is closely related to the process of *representation*: the neural storage and retrieval of

[103] Cf. Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999).

past events. Interaction in the present is based on what one can remember of, and apply from the past. The intentional manipulation of these representations of the past separates humans from other species. A strongly developed capacity for meta-cognition is essential for human cognitive behaviour: meta-cognition allows humans to decide on what they want to represent, how they want to represent it (by means of the body, in language, or by making use of artefacts), and why they want to represent it (for instance, for the purpose of communication or the rehearsing of skills). The self, as the logical effect of meta-cognition, is inextricable from the working of the human mind; humans could not survive in cultures without advanced forms of self-representation.

Human cultures have developed practices by means of which meta-cognitive processing can be made the primary concern of communication; sharing this kind of knowledge is crucial for the functioning and survival of individuals in any given culture. In the theory presented in this chapter, art is one of these practices. Art involves the making of intentional representations of the self at work, in the form of mimetic events that are shared between members of a cultural group: its ultimate purpose is the co-regulation of meta-cognitive processing. As mimesis, art *shows* rather than *tells*: showing (Donald's 'action-metaphor') is typical for mimetic representation, whereas telling belongs to the mythic mind, involving the use of language to conceptualise, or give meaning to, the self.

In poetry, showing and telling are combined. In poetic events narratives are shaped to occur as 'singular' performances. Poets can achieve these performances by organising language by means of exploiting its concrete manifestations – that is, by using its sounds, rhythms, and outward appearance as principles of organisation. As Dissanayake has convincingly shown, the musical organisation of language can be retraced to the earliest, proto-linguistic, stages of human development, and, as Donald would suggest, to the early stages of the human species as a whole. Musical patterns can be employed to force language into mimetic events. These poetic events are produced by the reader. While performing their crafts, poets are their own first readers. When processed by other minds, poetry can effectuate a layered meta-cognitive event, requiring from readers that they not only enact the poem, but also construct the role of the creator, thus identifying themselves with the poet and his personae. With this explanatory theory of poetry as a form of self-knowledge we can vindicate Herbert's contention that 'in doing we learne'. While living we learn, and we live by what we have learnt. With these conceptions in mind we can return to Herbert and review how his aims as a pastor and poet could combine into one single purpose: healing the pastoral flock, tuning it to God's intentions.

# chapter 5

## *Re-membering*

Helpe thy selfe, and God will helpe thee

Outlandish proverb 537

*5.1 Towards a cognitive Herbertian poetics*

The aim of this chapter is to re-member, or put back together, Herbert's *Temple*, re-assessing the mechanisms that underlie Herbert's pastoral reading community, described in chapter 2 and 3, in light of the cognitive theory of culture and art, which was presented in chapter 4. The main premise of this theory is that human culture is driven by distinct forms of cognitive behaviour, each generating its own forms of representation. From an evolutionary and cognitive perspective, human culture is a constant process of dealing with life communally; individual bodies are coordinated, brought together, by joint representational practices, one of which is art. The site of these practices is the individual mind. Each mind surveys and controls itself; human minds are by necessity self-conscious. Every single act of intentional representation involves the self, which results from the process of monitoring one's own cognitive operations: cognising cognition (meta-cognition) is a crucial part of human cognitive behaviour and culture. As outlined above, meta-cognition can be made the object of representation. If meta-cognition is represented and shared mimetically, we come close to what has historically been categorised as 'art'. Pursuing this logic, a mimetic structure can also be retraced in the working of poetry, in which language is organised in concrete, mimetic patterns.

Herbert clearly acknowledged that continuous self-reflection (meta-cognition, in Donaldian terms) was crucial for the well-being of individual Christians. Herbert was an emphatically self-reflective man, always "conscious of his consciousness,"[1] and he sought to teach this quality, which was itself a constant source of affliction, to those placed under his care. As a pastor, he offered his own exemplary life and *The Temple* as devices in which his flock could recognise itself and thus strengthen its self-awareness; thus, his pastoral behaviour could work to the benefit of those living in his community. Herbert's reputed versatility, being "variously described as priest, poet,

[1] Donald Friedman, "Pastoral Conversions", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010), 35-51: p. 22.

scholar, musician and saint",[2] can be freshly understood here. Approaching the pastoral role from a cognitive perspective, we can assess Herbert's roles as poet, priest, and thinker as consisting of mimetic, mythic, and theoretic forms of (meta-) cognition, respectively. As an experiential, concrete representation of the self in action, *The Temple* enables mimetic meta-cognition. As mimesis, Herbert's poetry allows readers to tune their 'selves' during shared, emotionally charged, events to the poetic personae that re-live and continue the Christian meta-narrative, matching lines from the Bible with private experience. Readers were to implement this process in their own lives. By teaching his readers to match their realities with God's Word, Herbert sought to effectuate stability in his community. In the first two chapters it was argued that *The Temple* was designed as an integral part of Herbert's pastoral duties. Chapter 4 has provided a theoretical, explanatory basis for a perspective on poetry as a specific kind of representing and sharing knowledge. In this fifth chapter, my aim is to bring these reflections on human life (separated by time and terminology but quite similar in the principles they adhere to) together, and show how Herbert's pastoral mediation of self-control could lead his readers and community to temperance in their lives. In Herbert's model, this mediation consisted in the exemplary behaviour of the parson – experientially (here we can place *The Temple*), doctrinally, and theoretically.

*5.2 Herbert's culture and art*

Herbert and his contemporary Christian readers lived in a theoretic culture; graphic media, most prominently the written Word, were available to store knowledge outside biological memories. In theoretic culture, evolutionarily older mimetic and mythic cognitive strategies are retained, and they remain in use. The same holds true for Herbert's day and age; moreover, it would seem that, within theoretic confines, mythic cognition was dominant.[3] Early modern England was deeply religious, as Debora Kuller Shuger has asserted: "Religion during [the early modern] period supplies the primary language of analysis. It is the cultural matrix for exploration of virtually every topic."[4] The Bible was the guideline for life. It was not just read, but *used*: Christians were supposed to interpret their lives by means of its narratives.[5] In ways hard to imagine today, Christianity, and the narratives and practices that came with it, pervaded all aspects of human life.

Herbert's Wiltshire parish and his ideal model of the Christian community were enclaves in which the Biblical interpretation of events was even more pronounced. Herbert's adherence to "the Protestant insistence that the Bible contained all knowledge and was a complete guide for

[2] Amy M. Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (London: Cornell University Press, 1977): p. 5.

[3] Donald situates the first predominantly theoretic cultures in Ancient Greece (about 700 B.C.), in which we see the gradual subservience of myth to Aristotelian, empirical ideals. The arrival of Christianity (2-400 A.D.) marked a shift in dominance from theory to myth: the meta-narrative of Christianity became dominant. Herbert's early modern England, although on its way to new theoretical explorations (see chapter 6), continued this predominantly religious, mythic mode.

[4] Kuller Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1990): p. 6.

[5] Cf. Joseph A. Galdon, *Typology and Seventeenth-Century Literature* (The Hague: Mouton and Co, 1975).

every action in man's life" shines through in all his writings.[6] In Herbert's conception the contents of the Bible provided the basic frame in which true meaning could be assigned to reality. The parson was to guide his people in this process. In *Priest*, Herbert remarks that "the chief and top of [the parson's] knowledge consists in the book of books, the storehouse and magazine of life and comfort, the holy Scriptures. There he sucks, and lives" (228). All knowledge, including self-knowledge, was supposedly stored in the Bible. The parson's role is to 're-live' the Bible, and inspire his community to follow him. Using the Bible properly includes aligning oneself with its typology. One has to become part of the Biblical narrative, fitting into its language.[7] Herbert's contemporary, fellow preacher and poet, John Donne addressed this issue in his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624):

> The stile of thy works, the phrase of thine Actions, is Metaphorical.
> The institution of thy whole worship in the old Law was a continuall Allegory; types & figures overspread all; and figures flowed into figures, and powered themselves out into further figures.[8]

If this is a typically mythic line of thought, in which the workings of language (symbolic practices as metaphors, allegories, and 'types') coincide with the representation of reality, and God structures the world by framing it in metaphors, the practical strategies to achieve this Biblical attunement are also predominantly mythic. One should use the language of the Bible to assign meaning to one's surroundings,[9] as Herbert points out: "[Our] Saviour made plants and seeds to teach the people" so that "labouring people (…) might have everywhere monuments of his doctrine, remembering in gardens, his mustard-seed, and lillyes, in the field his seed-corn, and tares" (*Priest* 261). There is thus a tendency to turn "all outward blessings to inward advantages" (271) by assigning the proper meaning to them.

However, Herbert intended to take his pastoral role much further than to guide his community in the Christian interpretation of the world. He applied distinct mimetic and theoretic cognitive strategies, in order to serve his community in as exact a manner as possible. As language framed by mimesis, his poetry has its own specific role to play in his model of the pastoral community. He did not intend to illustrate doctrine with his poetry, but rather teach by physical example how life was to be lived by using the Bible (see 2.6). He designed *The Temple* to generate *mimetic*, rather than ideological, knowledge. In Donaldian theory, mimetic representation denotes the

[6] Joseph H. Summers, *George Herbert, His Religion and Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954): pp. 79-80.
[7] Cf. Fish, Stanley. *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Cemtury Literature* (Berkely and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. 1972): pp. 43-77.
[8] John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* ed. A. Raspa (1624, Queen's / McGill UP, 1995): p. 100.
[9] Cf. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics in the Seventeenth Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979): pp. 253-83.

use of sensory-motor patterns to share and represent the communal memory. *The Temple* is an extension of this representational mode. In *The Temple* Herbert thus practices a basic social situation: that of sharing corporeal patterns, of regulating the emotions (or the passions) in human cognitive interaction. The presence of Christ is enacted in the harmonious musical structure of Herbert's verse, ensuring that the regulatory interaction that it generates is perfected and holy. Julia Guernsey has made the connection between the poetic prosody of *The Temple* and the Divine Other that is present in the poems. According to Guernsey, poetic form [that is, the perfect mimetic patterning] functions as a 'second self' – a 'prosodic subject' or 'New Man' – a perfect pattern of spiritual and physical unity. Poetic form thus enables the interaction between the self and the divine Other:[10] between an actual and an ideal life. Herbert's depiction of an actual Christian life reveals that all the threats that one faces in life are inherent to the self. In fact, I would argue with Paul Dyck that "Herbert's enemy (…) is the self; his salvation is found in the church."[11] Both this enemy and salvation, the actual self and the ideal presence of Christ, have their place in *The Temple*. In this poetic process mimesis and myth are combined: language is framed in harmonious patterns.

The life-system that Herbert erected in his prose treatises, on the other hand, is distinctly theoretic: in combination, *TTS* and *Priest* offer a model for corporeal and communal self-control. Herbert was clearly concerned with disorder in *The Temple*, despite its orderly appearance. In *Priest* and *TTS* he found ways to theoretically model this disorder, and offer strategies of controlling it. In line with modern cognitive theorising, Herbert proposed that the principles of controlling one's body could be extended to the community. If the body could be healed and tempered by controlling one's diet and thus one's corporeal, humoral disposition, the individual selves of those living in the pastoral community could also be controlled by regulating behaviour.[12] If these two strategies – the mimetic and the theoretic – feature prominently in Herbert's idealised pastoral role, the overarching frame in which these representational modes feature is linguistic: God's Word. By consequence, *The Temple*, apart from providing its mimetic pictures of Herbert's 'holy passions' and fitting into Herbert's modelling of Christian temperance, is itself also distinctly mythic. For one, Herbert steeps his poems in Biblical language. God is ever present, both through Scripture, and as a direct speaker, intervening in the thoughts and passions of the poetic personae.

### *5.3 The artefact / Herbert as toolmaker*

From a cognitive perspective, the poetic artefact, as written page, is a device that can mediate the

[10] Julia Carolyn Guernsey, *The Pulse of Praise; Form as a Second Self in the Poetry of George Herbert* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999): pp. 1-22.

[11] Paul Dyck, "George Herbert and the Liturgical Experience of Scripture," in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010), 197-210: p. 206.

[12] To corroborate this view, *OED* 1 indicates that diet could also apply to one's "course of life", or "way of living or thinking."

poetic process, functioning as an extension of Herbert's pastoral body. With *The Temple* Herbert created a tool that worked properly. Readers can put this tool to use by making it their own. As outlined in the previous chapter, reflection on the craft required for the making of tools is an integral part of tool use, and therefore also of poetic (mimetic meta-cognitive) cognition (cf. 3.8). Reflection on Herbert's technique was also part of the reception of *The Temple*. Elizabeth Clarke, for instance, has called attention to contemporary reading practices of Herbert, "which included a judgment of the method of composition of *The Temple*."[13] When generating the potential of the artefact, readers put themselves in the author's position, imagining his craft while reading.

One of Herbert's roles, then, is that of the craftsman, the creator of an artefact that can function as the extension of his body. Clarke has remarked that "[p]robably the most impressive construction in *The Temple* is the role of the Reformation poet."[14] This role was widely acknowledged in the contemporary reception of *The Temple*. Wilcox has explored that "[the] poem 'To the Authour' of [Christopher] Harvey's *Synagogue* (1647) writes metaphorically of Herbert as 'the Hand' and the imitator as 'the Finger'; in *The Temple*, God was the hand of creation guiding Herbert's 'fingers' to hold his quill."[15] Herbert's role as intermediary creator was acknowledged in the posthumous reception of his work. His earliest biographer, Barnabas Oley, comments on Herbert's writing in "A Prefatory View of the Life of Mr. Geo. Herbert" (1652), paying particular attention to his artistry:

> His singular dexterity in sweetning this Art, thou mayst see in the Garb and phrase of his writing. Like a wise Master-builder, he has set about a forme of Speech, transferred it in a Figure, as if he was all the while learning from another man's mouth or pen, and not teaching any. (…) He saith*, He does this, and he does that*; whereas, poor men, we did no such thing. This dart of his, thus dipped, pierces the soul.[16]

Herbert is the 'wise Master-builder', the craftsman who can make an external, theoretic device. The 'forme of Speech' that is re-enacted by the reader, language shaped by mimetic cognition, is 'transferred (…) in a Figure', the physical shape assumed by the artefact. As this passage makes clear, it is difficult to make a sharp distinction between the actual existence of the artefact and the poetic dynamic process that it can generate; Oley merges reflection on the tool itself with the process which that tool can generate, the piercing of the soul, when it is put to use.

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[13] Elizabeth Clarke, *Theory and Theology in George Herbert's Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): p. 25.
[14] Clarke 1997, 1.
[15] Helen Wilcox, "'Something Understood': The Reputation and Influence of George Herbert to 1715" (Diss. U of Oxford, 1984): p. 4. Harvey's poems count as early imitations of Herbert's verse; they were frequently attached to later seventeenth-century editions of *The Temple*.
[16] In *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1983): p. 79. Original source: 'Herbert's Remains. Or, Sundry Pieces of the sweet Singer of the Temple, Mr George Herbert' (1652).

Readers were to reconstruct the [meta-] meta-cognitive processes of the poet creating his mimetic patterns realised in language. Chana Bloch's view on retrieving the specific qualities of Herbert's verse can serve to substantiate this theoretical insight: reading *The Temple* involves a reconstruction of the author's mind:

> We have seen the imaginative freedom with which Herbert uses the tradition, bringing together disparate and even contradictory passages, elaborating on their suggestions, and ranging them dramatically, so that what they say strikes us with the force of discovery. Only by paying attention to these *movements of Herbert's mind* can we understand how a poet so deeply indebted to traditional materials writes poems of such astonishing freshness.[17]

While reading, the reader can reconstruct the process of controlling and choosing from the memory, to select the language fit to represent events. Reflection on Herbert's craft offers his readers a comparative perspective on their individual control over their memories, and by consequence, over their 'selves'.

The readers' reflection on Herbert's craftsmanship would sometimes lead to action: Herbert's poetry gave rise to many followers who imitated his style, most prominently Christopher Harvey in *The Synagogue* (1640) and Henry Vaughan in *Silex Scintillans* (1650). Writing poetry in imitation of Herbert is yet another way of comprehending him. By imitating Herbert's craft one can temporarily aspire to holiness in one's life. With the poetic imitation of *The Temple* one can thus avoid, or at least temporarily control, the inaccuracy of language, itself an important theme in *The Temple* and in Herbert's poetics. In 'The Flower', for instance, Herbert remarks on this topic: "We say amisse / This or that is: / Thy word is all, if we could spell" (568, 19-21). God's Word is a kind of language that cannot be grasped or produced by the human mind. The use of the word 'spell' here indicates that divine language is received rather than produced, not so much a product of human reason, but of receiving God's grace.

By analogy, Herbert's poetic followers acknowledged the inferiority of their language to that of *The Temple*. Herbert's reputation as perfect mediator and enactor of the Christian narrative ensured that his words were perceived as inspired and holy. The response to his and Crashaw's verse, formulated by Clement Barksdale in 1651, reflects this mechanism: "Mean while these *sacred Poems* [*The Temple*] in my Sight / I place, and *read*, that I may learn to *write*."[18] Herbert's craft was considered holy. His creation of *The Temple* assumed a similar sacred status as Creation itself, as it mediates one's union with the craftsmanship of the 'Sacred Artist'. Following this logic, those imitating Herbert must acknowledge their imperfections, and express that they are

[17] Chana Bloch, *Spelling the Word: George Herbert and the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): p. 112. Italics added.
[18] In Patrides, 72. Original source: Barksdale, "Nympha Libethris or the Cotswold Muse" (1651).

by nature incapable of matching their examples. A similar principle informs Cardell Goodman's "Beawty in Raggs or Divine Phansies putt into Broken Verse", published in the same year as the first edition of *The Temple* (1633). In the preface to his poems, Goodman states:

> I need not tell you whence I took my pattern, for the Meditation; the Author is well knowne to you, that you will discover the mark I aime att, though every shaft I deliver fall many bowes short of it.
>
> The Example indeed is farre above my imitation, and I know my weakness will appeare so much the more, because I scribble under so faire a Coppy: butt my ambition (I confess) was always to look upon the best Patternes, though with weak and tender eyes; and heerin my aime is, not to bee a fellow, butt a follower, att distance, of my Leader: It shall bee honour enough for mee, to bee accompted His Echo, endeavouring to say something after him, though I reach no farther, than the repetition of half words and sentences.[19]

It is not hard to see how Herbert's poetic craftsmanship can be situated in his overall pastoral concerns. As a pastor, Herbert's mediates the patterns of Christianity as the embodiment of his 'Blest Order' (see 3.6). Taking yet another step back, Herbert constructed *Priest*, so that others, including himself, might have 'a mark to aim at'. Herbert's parson mediated these patterns by example, just as his poetic craft is an example for those seeking to emulate him, making 'Herbert the poet' a pastor in his own right: one who should be followed 'att distance'. The poems thus mediate the proper use of language, as Goodwell's final lines make clear. Since, in Herbert's conception, a godly use of language is directly related to the well-being of the body, we can begin to see how his holy Temple can help create a healthy community.

In Herbert's thinking, the creation of musical, poetic frames by himself and by his readers fits into the larger order of the world in which they play their parts; it is another way of aligning oneself with God, a method towards 'active attunement'. In "The Church-Floore", God is the craftsman installing his perfection in a fallible body, and, by analogy, in the frame of the church: God is the "*Architect*, whose art / Could build so strong in a weak heart" (244, 19-20).[20] Herbert's aim was to undertake a similar holy construction process; naturally, he applied music to frame his language and pastoral practices. Music, as Oley mentions, was Herbert's "Heaven upon earth": it elevated the soul. Herbert held that human beings could be creative, as long as they respected their intermediary role between God and the rest of creation. In *Priest* he stresses this point, stating in one of his prayers there: "Thy hands both made us, and also made us Lords of all thy creatures; giving us one world in ourselves, and another to serve us" (*Priest* 288). The Lord made lords of mankind, itself capable of similar, yet tainted, creative acts. The role of the pastor is thus

[19] In Patrides, 62. Original source: Goodman, *Beauwty in Raggs or Divine Phansies putt into Broken Verse*, ed. R.J. Roberts (Reading, 1958).

[20] Another biblical metaphor that refers to a similar role is that of "God as potter and humanity as clay," which seems to have inspired the imagery of 'The Priesthood' (Cf. Wilcox 2007, pp. 550-1).

to be pursued by every single Christian. Herbert's profession centred on showing his community how to live in accordance with God, so that each individual could become a pastor and craftsman for his own sake.

*5.4 Reading Herbert*

In his prose treatises, *Priest* and *TTS*, Herbert constructed a theoretical frame in which *The Temple* could assume its place and function. In this frame, Herbert's poetry builds on the actual exemplary behaviour of a country priest, ultimately preceded by and pre-enacted in the life of Christ, the Word made flesh. The life of Christ provides the perfect example for the parson, and thus for *The Temple*, as it shows how the Biblical narrative can be enacted in an actual ('real-time') life. This enactment takes place by organising the Bible in musical, mimetic patterns. By 'making music' of the Bible, one can translate its contents into rhythmically punctuated one-to-one interaction: this cognitive strategy allows the Word to be 'felt', or represented bodily, rather than interpreted or explained, thus fitting in with the early modern experience of an embodied universe with man at the centre of Creation, all in perpetual dancing motion (cf. 1.1 and 3.6). 'Attuning' one's self to this dance ensures health, as one is made fit to live in one's surroundings. Attunement, in this conception, can be understood as a continual striving for *homeostasis*: Herbert's re-spelling of the Word in *The Temple* is to be re-created with every reading of his verse, offering means to his readers to comply with the order of things. The construction of the joint lyrical space in which this process can occur depends on the readers' attention: they have to enact Herbert's verse in their own minds.

Herbert's holy life shapes his poetry and his pastoral life, which should serve as representational devices for the (reading) community. Both the parson's life and his devotional verse serve the purpose of elevating the souls that are under his care. Thus, as Graham has noted, "the persuasive power of the preacher's own holy life" (76) is extended to Herbert's verse: both practices are rhetorical.[21] In *Priest* Herbert remarks that "[t]he Country Parson's Library is a holy Life", "[f]or the temptations with which a good man is beset, and the ways which he used to overcome them, being told to another, whether in private conference, or in the Church, are a Sermon" (278). By living through his afflictions, the parson is constantly re-spelling the Word for his community, which can 'read' (experience, rather than interpret) his behaviour, and apply it in similar fashions. Herbert offered his poetry and his pastoral life to be read by his community, in order to transmit his self-experience to those under his pastoral care; the resultant sharing of self-knowledge and self-control should result in a communal tempering of the flux of life.

During the reading process, the reader identifies with Herbert's role, reflecting on his poetic craft, while also re-living the personae's struggles and resolves, and the musical patterning

[21] Kenneth Graham, "Herbert's Holy Practice", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010): pp. 72-90.

of these dynamics. During the reading process, then, meta-cognitive processes (needed for perfecting one's craft and giving shape to language) are 'tuned' to the presence of Herbert, and by pastoral mediation, of Christ. From a cognitive perspective, this merging of selves is inherent to the ritualising and regulating function of music: during this shared processing, selves temporarily merge to synchronise and co-regulate (meta-cognitive) behaviour. By taking part in the music of *The Temple*, one becomes temporarily one with Herbert, and with Christ. Reading *The Temple* resembles Holy Communion: in both practices physical processes are sanctified and temporarily shared.[22] In this respect, and with regard to the re-living of a holy life by reading Herbert's poems, Terry Sherwood has described *The Temple* as a "Eucharistic experience". The ritual union with God manifests itself in the perceivable qualities of Christ: "the taste, smell, and sound of sweetness" (59); [23] the same sweetness that Herbert associates with (Church-) music. This is the essence of Herbert's poetry: he orders language so that its rhetorical impact is felt in the body – the result of mimetic cognition being imposed on language.

From a different perspective, but referring to a similar principle, Heather Asals has equated Herbert's *Temple* to the Eucharist in that both ritual practices go against the confines of language: "Language itself is the *Sacrifice* in *The Temple*, and the poet's role is sacred in that 'he doth present / The sacrifice for all'. Herbert *breaks the host of language itself*; he *breaks* the Word itself. And it is such breaking of the letter of the word which releases it from terrestrial Egypt and permits it to ascend – transcend to celestial Canaan."[24] While reading *The Temple*, then, one should combine re-living both the personae's and the author's behaviour. Herbert's poems allow him to combine truth with beauty, earth with heaven, life-likeness with God's presence: the poetic pictures of *The Temple* are both accurate and perfected. According to Helen Wilcox this is in line with "Herbert's sense of his double vocation as priest and poet. His work strives to delight with the beauty of its plainness and to teach with the truth of its perceptions; both of these principles apply, whether the medium is the rhetoric of poetry or the liturgy of the church."[25] The 'pictures' that both Herbert and Ferrar encountered in *The Temple* (cf. 2.2) reflect this double purpose; they can be conceived of as holy and divine in their harmonious structure – an aesthetic perfection to be perceived by the senses. At the same time, they reflect Herbert's many conflicts of the soul.

In Herbert's pastoral terms, his readers *frame* themselves after his example – that is, after his harmonies, his re-enacted life, his re-creation of the Word, and his craft that is grounded in self-reflection. Two connotations of framing are important in this respect: "To gain ground, make progress; to get on (with); to prosper, succeed" (*OED* 2), and "To form or construct in the

[22] For the parallels between the structure of 'The Church' and the proceedings of Communion, cf. Dyck 2010.
[23] Sherwood, *Herbert's Prayerful Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989): p. 20.
[24] Asals, *Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981): p. 11.
[25] Wilcox, "Hallow'd Fire; or, When Is a Poet Not a Priest?" in *George Herbert's Pastoral*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (2010), 91-109: p. 106.

mind; to conceive, imagine" (8c). Herbert's readers can prosper by means of their constructions of *The Temple*. This framing, Herbert's teaching, is built up in a distinct pattern. In 'The Parson catechizing', a section in *Priest*, Herbert outlines the duties of the parson who is involved with the distribution of knowledge in his community.

> The Countrey Parson values Catechizing highly: for there being three points of his duty, the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation in every one of his Flock; the other, to multiply, and build up this knowledge to a spirituall Temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to presse, and drive it to practice, turning it to reformation of life, by pithy and lively exhortations. (255)

The three main parts of *The Temple* reflect the three functions of catechising proposed here (although each part is concerned with all 'points' mentioned).[26] In *The Church Porch* Herbert starts off with instruction and installing 'competent knowledge' in the reader. In *The Church* he proceeds to build his dynamic Temple. In *The Church Militant*, finally, the readers are urged to apply this knowledge to their lives, presenting them with an apocalyptic vision of the future of the Church and the second coming of Christ.

The opening section of *The Temple*, *The Church Porch*, creates the setting in which the communication between Herbert and his readers can occur. It serves to elevate them, and bring them to an appropriate state of mind, providing to that didactic purpose a set of laws and morals, reminiscent of Old Testament teachings, which urge a 'sweet youth', and the reader, to consider the advantages of living a temperate life. To achieve this temperate behaviour, one requires control over one's self: 'a mast'ring minde' (17, 104) is at stake here.

This introductory part leads up to the site where the actual work is to be done. This central site in which self-knowledge can be attained under pastoral guidance, *The Church*, although seemingly randomly ordered, should be perceived as an organic whole, related to its function. Bloch connects the organisation of *The Church* to that of the Psalms; both are framed in an apparent lack of order,[27] mimicking the structure of a Christian life, in which one's union with God is gained and lost in repetitive cycles. Focussing on the titles of the poems in this section, and noting the frequent use of definite articles there, Matthias Bauer has argued for the quintessential function of *The Church*, in which each poem stands for a particular part of Herbert's life, which is itself represented in the 'poetic cosmos', or 'house of memory' of *The Temple*.[28] In this central section of *The Temple*, Herbert displays what he considered the crucial processes of human lives: the interior struggles of man, poignantly expressed in the five 'Affliction'-poems, but recurring throughout *The Church* (see also 'Conscience' and 'The Collar'), the writing process itself (cf. 'Jordan (2)'), so

[26] For a concise account of the structure of *The Temple*, cf. Wilcox, *The English Poems*, 47-9.
[27] Cf. Bloch, 238-9.
[28] Cf. Bauer, "'A Title Strange, Yet True'. Toward an Explanation of Herbert's Titles," in *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane*, eds. Wilcox and Todd (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995): pp. 103-120.

crucial while living in concordance with the Word (itself the topic of 'The H. Scriptures (1)' and '(2)'), the suffering of Christ and its significance for Christians (cf. 'The Sacrifice'), the dynamics of the order of things ('The Flower', 'Easter'), and the complete dependence on God when relating one's being to this order ('Virtue', 'Denial', 'Love (3)'). The all-covering theme, then, is the survival of man in a fallen world; by re-constructing this process, readers are taught to control their lives.

The final section of *The Temple*, *The Church Militant*, closes off the poetic act of communication, sending the 'tempered' reader off into the world. This section makes clear how the knowledge gained in *The Church* can be put to use in the struggle against sin and disorder. Stanley Fish's analysis of *The Church-Militant* stresses the ongoing struggle that is requested from the reader of this section of *The Temple*:

> it is inconclusive, ill-proportioned, and anticlimactic, and it does not leave the reader with a satisfactory sense of closure. Nor is it meant to. The very idea of The Church Militant has at its heart the necessity of struggle and toil.[29]

*The Church Militant* provides the bridge (the stepping down) between the poetic knowledge conveyed in *The Church*-section, and the application of that knowledge in one's life. It also shows glimpses of the horizon in which that life is to be lived, moving towards the second coming of Christ. The church militant is the tempering force of the Christian life, "the church on earth, as referred to in the Holy Communion service: 'Let us pray for the church militant here on earth'."[30] To Herbert, the church militant represents the future of the Christian narrative, the destiny of which is unknown, for it is in God's hands. What Herbert offers his readers is a means to stay on the right track, to re-live the Word, in order to be authored and saved by God.

*5.5 Temperance: controlling the self*

Herbert's verse enacts the process of temperance; he shows his readers how one can make room for God by restraining oneself, most obviously represented through simple poetic language that is made 'quiet', subservient to the Word. In this sense, Herbert's poetics can be applied to, or is the result of, his principles of the proper Christian life; with *The Temple* one can sharpen the (cognitive) skills that are necessary to survive in the world. In evolutionary terms, temperance is a strategy to maintain *fitness*: a temperate community is fit to function properly as time unfolds. In Herbert's community the parson and the church are instrumental when it comes to dealing with time and change. In his near-contemporary biographical notes on Herbert, Barnabas Oley dwells on "severall excellencies" of the poet, which entail "his *consciencious expence of Time*,

[29] Stanley Fish, *The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978): p. 154.
[30] *The English Poems of George Herbert.* ed. Helen Wilcox (Cambridge: CUP, 2007): p. 674

which he even measured by the *pulse*, that *native watch* God has set in every of us."[31] As always, the body is Herbert's point of reference here: the tempered body of the parson, and the Order it was supposed to represent (cf. 3.5), functions as a tool to heal the bodies that are placed under his pastoral care; thus, the parson 'orders the disorderly' (cf. 3.7).

By extension, the parson's house and Church, equally 'clean' and 'sweet' as the parson's body, language and behaviour, are locations in which the manipulation of the self and the controlling of time can take place (cf. 3.3); Herbert merges the physical and social environment as one dynamic, disorderly system, on which order needs to be imposed. In Walton's *Life of George Herbert* we get a glimpse of Herbert's reputed preoccupation with time, and the role of the church to provide its members with a sense of control and moderation to cope with change.

> He [Herbert] instructed them ['his Parishioners'] also what benefit they had by the Church's appointing the celebration of holidays, and the excellent use of them; namely, that they were set apart for particular commemorations of particular mercies received from almighty God; and (…) to be the landmarks to distinguish times, for by them we are taught to take notice how time passes by us (…) [here follow the most important holy days on the Church calendar] – Thus the Church keeps an historical and circular commemoration of times, as they pass by us; of such times as ought to incline us to occasional praises, for the particular blessings which we do, or might receive, by those holy commemorations.[32]

The Church calendar functions as a framework of commemoration, enabling the community to live regularly. This framework is both 'historical and circular': in line with the Christian mythic framework, history is conceived of as beginning and ending in order, intervened by processes of sin and change, moving from the paradisiacal state to the fall of mankind, to its redemption through Christ. The church, then, "is a place that is exactly not a place, but a marker of a journey."[33] Rather than a safe place in which on can retreat from the world, Herbert viewed the church as a means to live *in* and *with* the world. The church, as all pastoral activities and dwellings, should be instrumental in controlling the flux of life.

Similarly the parson's exemplary behaviour functions as a marker for the journey of the pastoral community. As the intermediary between God and community and the representative of the church, the parson should enact and mediate temperance. In 'The Parson praying' we get a glimpse of the kind of exemplary motor-behaviour that Herbert envisioned:

> The Countrey Parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himselfe to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all

[31] Patrides, 80.
[32] Izaak Walton, *The Complete Angler & The Lives of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert & Sanderson* (1670, London: Macmillan, 1906): pp. 404-5.
[33] Dyck 2010, 200.

> other gestures which may expresse a hearty and unfeyned devotion. This he doth, first as being truly touched and amazed with the majesty of God, before Whom he then presents himself; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole Congregation, whose sin he then beares, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar to be bathed, and washed in the sacred Laver of Christs blood. (228)

In effect, in his amazement with 'the majesty of God' the parson communicates with his flock, enacting self-restraint – a process reminiscent of the 'Dedication' to *The Temple*, in which God is asked to 'turn [the readers'] eyes hither [to *The Temple*], who shall make a gain' (cf. 2.2). Following Herbert's poetics, the 'gain' is the restraint of the body, and, by extension, the possibility for the purification of the soul. Herbert conceived of the pastor as a 'representational device'. According to Summers, "[t]he ultimate method of reflecting God's glory was the creation of a work of decency and order, a work of beauty, whether a church, an ordered poem, or an ordered life."[34] It should be clear, however, that Herbert was not only after the reflection of God's glory: his 'work[s] of decency and order' were designed to mediate it.

Apart from mediating God's presence in works of beauty, there is also an earthly role for the Pastor, in that he must confront his community with the changes inherent to reality. In Chapter XIV of *Priest*, 'The Parson in Circuit', Herbert makes clear that the Pastor should also visit his community outside Sundays and church, "[f]or there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs" (247). Part of the Anglican Order, the parson takes his parish to church, "exposing to them [the members of the community] the uncertainty of humane affairs" (253). At the core of the parson's role, then, lies that Christians be taught that life is holy and harmonious, as well as in constant disorder, and subject to affliction. The pictures of *The Temple*, as discerned by Ferrar and Herbert (cf. 2.2), of harmony and conflict (or combined, of holy passions) do not contradict each other, but are rather separate perspectives on the same process.

The priest must have acted out the struggles experienced by those in his community if he is to function properly, just as Christ has acted out the Christian life before him. Herbert's crafting of devotional poetry fits into this pattern; as Heather Asals has explored, he considered the writing of poetry as an enactment of Christ's sacrificial life and end.[35] The poet/priest must know from experience what it is like to sin and to achieve temperance, "esteeming it absurd, that he should exceed, who teacheth others temperance" (*Priest* 241). Moreover, he must be able to communicate these struggles to the members of his community. As he explains,

[34] Summers, 84.

[35] This is one the main ideas proposed in *Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). Asals marks the ceremonial aspect of writing poetry, fitting it into the larger gestural patterns of Herbert's Anglicanism.

> the parson having studied, and mastered all his lusts and affections within, and the whole Army of Temptations without, hath ever so many sermons ready penn'd, as he hath victories. And it fares in this as it doth in Physick: He that hath been sick of a Consumption, and knows what recovered him, is a Physitian so far as he meetes with the same disease, and temper; and can much better, and particularly do it, then he that is generally learned, and was never sick. And if the same person had been sick of all diseases, and were recovered of all by things that he knew; there were no such Physician as he, both for skill and tendernesse. Just so it is in Divinity, and that not without manifest reason: for though the temptations may be diverse in divers Christians, yet the victory is alike in all, being by the self-same Spirit. (*Priest* 278)

Herbert acknowledges here that, although each individual life is private and specific, the structure of these lives is the same for everyone. The life of the parson, when communicated, can thus function as a specific enactment for the universal structure of human behaviour and experience, against which those in his community can measure their own experience, and 'frame' their ways to resolve the various afflictions which are inevitable parts of their lives. Bloch, commenting on the last lines of 'The Crosse', asserts that "Herbert does not present God's doctrine in all its absoluteness, all its exacting authority; he presents a human being speaking God's Word, bringing it to life by living it:"[36] Herbert's poetic persona is temperance incorporated.

The life of Christ is the ultimate blueprint for the maintaining of temperance. In Chapter IX of *Priest*, 'The Parson's state of Life', we find this concept explained:

> *by these [fasting and praying] hee keeps his body tame, serviceable, and healthful; and his soul fervent, active, young, and lusty as an eagle. He often readeth the Lives of the Primitive Monks, Hermits, and Virgins, and wondreth not so much at their patient suffering, and cheerfull dying under persecuting Emperours, (though that indeed be very admirable) as at their daily temperance, abstinence, watchings, and constant prayers, and mortifications in the times of peace and prosperity. To put on the profound humility, and the exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary vertues of that sort, and to keep them on in the sunshine, and noone of prosperity, he findeth to be as necessary, and as difficult at least, as to be cloathed with perfect patience, and Christian fortitude in the cold midnight stormes of persecution and adversity.* (237-8)

Herbert's imitation of Christ and his striving for temperance come together in the pursuit of simplicity.[37] Simplicity and exactness are the same, for as far as these concepts denote the leaving out of anything unnecessary in one's physical, mental, and spiritual behaviour, indicated in Herbert's opening statement on 'The Parson's Life' that "[t]he Countrey Parson is exceeding exact

[36] Bloch, 44.
[37] Cf. Louis L. Martz, *The Poetry of Meditation: A Study in English Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954): pp. 282-7.

in his Life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his wayes" (227). This is what it means to live by the example of Herbert's life: the reader should enact the principle of temperance by following the parson in God's ways. Herbert's mediation-by-representation as priest and poet exists in teaching and re-enacting the *structure* of the Christian life to his community.

In a tempered life one can achieve holiness; leaving out movements, words and thoughts that are unnecessary is the way to God, as Herbert indicates in *Briefe Notes*:

> wee ought to proceed, except there be a restraining motion (as *S. Paul* had when hee would have preached in Asia), and I conceive that restraining motions are much more frequent to the godly, then inviting motions; because the Scripture invites enough, for it invites us to all good, according that singular place, *Phil*. 4.8. A man is to embrace all good, but because he cannot doe all, God often chuseth which he shall doe, and that by restraining him from what he would not have him doe.[38]

"It's more pain to do nothing than something," as Herbert's outlandish proverb 884 goes. One ought to know one's place, so that one can do what ought to be done, and (perhaps more importantly) can leave out what is unnecessary. Each must discover for himself what that place is: the parson's role is to guide his people towards that understandings, as Herbert indicates in *Priest*: "And indeed, herein is the greatest ability of a Parson to lead his people exactly in the wayes of Truth, so that they neither decline to the right hand, nor to the left" (230). Discovering one's 'exact wayes' depends on the control that one can exert over oneself and the surroundings: once again, the parson is instrumental in leading his flock to God.

This striving for exactness, choosing God's path by applying temperance, is an *embodied* process, that is, it has its basis in controlling the dynamics of the human body. Herbert indicates that self-restraint starts with physically moving in the right direction: "After I had resolved to follow Temperance and Reason, and saw that it was no hard thing to do so, but the proper duty of man; I so addicted myself to this course of life, that I never went a foot out of the way" (*TTS* 292). Controlling one's movements and appearance is the basis for self-restraint. The description of Herbert's physical appearance in Walton's *Life* can thus serve as the basis for the overall impression he made on his community – the stature of his body was taken to reflect the state of his mind and soul:

> He (Herbert) was for his person of a stature inclining towards Tallness; his Body was very strait, and so far from being cumbred with too much flesh, that he was lean to an extremity. His aspect was cheerful, and his speech and motion did both declare him a Gentleman; for they were all so meek and obliging, that they purchased love and respect from all that knew him."[39]

[38] In *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941): p. 313.
[39] Walton, 392.

Herbert's body is 'strait', serving as a firm basis to 'lead his people exactly in the wayes of truth'. To his community, he has become the naturally growing 'tree' that he wishes to be in 'Affliction I'.[40] His leanness 'to an extremity' is the corporeal basis for the leanness of his language in *The Temple*: both are tempered, the body by means of the practices described in *TTS*, Herbert's language in interaction with an ideal 'other', God, reflected in the harmonious structure of his verse.

By mediation of the pastor, these individual properties could be extended to the community. In 'The Authour to the Reader', at the beginning of *Priest*, Herbert confirms the corporeal basis of this social role, when he reflects briefly on his reasons for writing an idealised account of the parson's life: "[Considering] with my self, That the way to please him [God], is to feed my Flocke diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a Pastour's Love, I have resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour, that I may have a mark to aim at" (224). In this justification for his treatise, Herbert manages to unite the physical, the feeding of his flock, and the meta-cognitive, the reflection on his own role, and the mediating roles of his fellow parsons. Given that these levels also work together in *The Temple*, where the craftsman and the suffering personae merge into the constellation of Herbert's verse, it seems likely that Herbert's perspective on the entire pastoral profession was based in a similar combination of levels of cognition. His gestural patterns, his exemplary motor behaviour, his sermons and conversations were always supervised by an extreme form of self-scrutiny, a strong and incessant drive to reflect on himself, while he was also continually concerned with the effects of this behaviour on his audience. Whereas we may separate these strategies in theory, however, in practice they would have merged, as Oley's introductory remark on *Priest* attests to: "I have given thee onely these lineaments of his [Herbert'] mind, and thou mayest fully serve thy selfe of this Book, in what virtue of his thy soul longeth after. *His* practice it was, and *His Character* it is, *His* as Authour, and *His* as *Object.*"[41]

From his physical appearance to his poetry, Herbert's pastoral role centred on the mediation of temperance: his writings can be regarded as an extension of this single principle. His poems allow his readers to tune themselves to holiness. His treatises on temperance and the Christian community provide the rules, by abiding to which one may achieve simplicity. The only writing that is less obviously suited to this purpose is Herbert's commentary on Valdesso's *Briefe Notes*, and yet, it is not different in principle. In these notes, Herbert seems to regulate the doctrinal thoughts of Valdesso. The main section in *Briefe Notes* is itself an act of pruning, consisting of "Briefe Notes

[40] Cf. 'Affliction I': ll. 55-59:

> Now I am here, what thou wilt do with me
> None of my book will show.
> I reade, and sigh, and wish I were a tree;
> For sure then I should grow
> To fruit and shade.

[41] In Patrides, 82.

relating to the dubious and offensive places in the following [Valdesso's] CONSIDERATIONS" (306). With regard to Herbert's aims here, McDowell has remarked that "the need for affective regulation furnishes Briefe Notes with a guiding theme, both in regard to the Considerations with which Herbert agrees and to those with which he finds fault."[42] Herbert projects these contents on his ways of dealing with Valdesso's text; his mythic behaviour here, the calibration of doctrine in this small commentary, can be regarded as an extension of his strife for temperance.

It should be clear, however, that to Herbert temperance is never a goal in itself; his main focus was always on God. On a similar topic, Christopher Hodgkins has remarked that "[f]or Herbert, pastoral authority, even in punishment, is not an end in itself, but rather a means to reconciliation and peace."[43] By extension, temperance and *The Temple* are ends towards reconciliation, towards dissolving with God in silence. Temperance denotes measure, the regulation of time. By controlling time Herbert and his readers can transcend it. In poetry, we can perceive this process at work by considering John Donne's 'Upon the Translation of the Psalms', a poem dedicated to a new translation of the psalms, produced by Philip and Mary Sidney in the late sixteenth century. Herbert's debt to the Psalms is well documented.[44] He urged that they be repeated frequently in church services, being "an historical and thankful repetition of mercies past."[45] In his verse Herbert sought to build on the qualities of the Psalms. Coburn Freer, for instance, has compared the 'muscular logic' of the Sidney translation to that of *The Temple*.[46] The physical impact of the Sidney psalms (and of *The Temple*) should allow readers to temporarily transcend the world, living in perfect accordance with divine forms, moving from human, lyrical to divine music, as Donne indicates:

> And, till we come th'Extemporall song to sing,
> (Learn'd the first hower, that we see the King,
> Who hath translated those translators) may
> These their sweet learned labours, all the way
> Be as our tuning, that, when hence we part,
> We may fall in with them, and sing our part. (51-56)[47]

Tuning the self, then, is instrumental to prepare oneself for God. The 'extemporall song', the music of heaven, is without measure; its rhythm, if it has any, no longer coheres with the passing of time. In heaven, the interaction is solely with God: there, Herbert's words should dissolve, and only

[42] Sean McDowell, "Holiness as a Psychological State in Herbert's *Briefe Notes on Valdesso's* Considerations", in *George Herbert Journal* 30.1&2 (2006-7), 109-24: p. 117.
[43] Hodgkins, "Introduction. Reforming Pastoral: Herbert and the Singing Shepherds," in Hodgkins 2010, 15-31: p. 21.
[44] Cf. Bloch, and Lewalski, 283-316.
[45] Walton, 401.
[46] Coburn Freer, *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972): pp. 72-108.
[47] In *Complete English Poems*, ed. C.A. Patrides (Boston, MA: Tuttle Publishing, 1994): p. 368-9.

the perfect divine patterns, the presence of Christ in *The Temple*, remain, freed from time and change. This means that God's music cannot be processed cognitively, as Herbert acknowledges in 'Providence': "If we could heare / Thy skill and art, what musick would it be!" (417, 39-40). God's music is an ideal, and not of this world. In human art, it can only be imitated imperfectly; art is always subservient to time, carrying sin wherever it goes.

In the Christian life, one should aim for states that transcend time and change, for the "obligation to God, and [one's] own soul, is above any temporall tye. Do well, and right, and let the world sinke" (*Priest* 270). The maintenance of order in one's behaviour, the stability provided by self-reflection, should eventually lead to a state of 'timelessness'. In a true union with God, one has to give up self-knowledge. Herbert acknowledges this when he states that "[the parson] carryes [his people] higher, even sometimes to a forgetting of themselves, knowing that there is one, who when they forget, remembers for them" (*Priest* 267). One can transcend time by tempering it, and leaving its tempered state behind. God transcends the mind and the memory: these human faculties have evolved in relation to time. Without change, without sin and the fallen nature of mankind, there can be no memory. Without sin there would have been no *Temple*, for "sinnes are not knowne till they be acted" (Outlandish proverb 942). Ultimately, Herbert's verse serves its purpose by dissolving and becoming 'something understood',[48] rather like a catalyst which, once used, loses its purpose and disappears. This dissolving in time can only happen in silence, as David Jasper has made clear: "[God's voice] is the final negation of all language and its demands – and their complete fulfilment in silence of the total presence of God."[49] We can extend this statement to apply to all forms of representation: for Herbert's pastoral purposes, human cognition should be applied to make itself superfluous. As a distinct cognitive act, the writing and reading of *The Temple* fits in this pattern; its expression of conflicts should serve to make room for God. Living through one's conflicts appears to be a necessary stage towards redemption.[50] To Herbert, then, one's "sighs and tears", like the "windes and waters" on earth, are valuable, not harmful, in a

[48] Cf. 'Prayer', line 14.

[49] David Jasper, "'Something Understood': From Poetry to Theology in the Writing of George Herbert", in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton*, ed. Christopher Hodgkins (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2010), 273-287: p. 285.

[50] Commenting on "[t]he Protestant-Pauline paradigm of salvation and the emotional states supposed to accompany it" (24), Barbara Lewalski has asserted that Herbert's (Protestant) poetics was built on the concept of sanctification, which itself could be initiated by a process of *conversion*. This experience should involve "a purging, or mollyfying, or breaking of the heart which readies it for the gift of repentance and saving faith" (p. 21) Lewalski quotes William Perkins' *A Golden Chaine* in this respect:

> The heart (…) must be bruised in peeces, that it may be fit to receive Gods saving grace offered unto it. Ezech.11.19. *I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within their bowels: and I will take the stonie heart out of their bodies, and I will give them a heart of flesh* (21).

For a good example of this process in action (from the assertion of God's presence and the breaking of this bond towards renewed signification and sanctification), see the *Church*-poem 'Jesu' (in Wilcox 2007, p. 400). See also 1.1.

Christian life: "[t]hey purge the aire without, within the breast" ('The Storm', 462, ll. 3, 1, 18).

Herbert's verse was to achieve this purging, cleaning effect for his readers. As he initiated this process, it makes sense that in the reception of *The Temple* a divine position outside time was frequently attributed to Herbert himself. In his *Life of Donne*, Isaak Walton refers to Herbert as one of 'primitive piety': he was a man not of his time. As we can see now, this particular quality attributed to his life created the context in which *The Temple* could work as a gateway to God. Briefly straying from Donne, Walton outlines Herbert's position, referring to him as

> that man of primitive piety, mr. George Herbert (…), who was the author of "The Temple, or Sacred Poems and Ejaculations," a book in which, by declaring his own spiritual conflicts, he hath comforted and raised many a dejected and discomposed soul, and charmed them into sweet and quiet thoughts; a book, by the frequent reading whereof, and the assistance of that spirit that seemed to inspire the author, the reader may attain habits of peace and piety, and all the gifts of the Holy Ghost and Heaven, and may by still reading still keep those sacred fires burning upon the altar of so pure a heart, as shall free it from the anxieties of the world, and keep it fixed upon things that are above.[51]

A man of 'primitive piety', Herbert appears as one reflecting on life from a position 'out of this world'. Walton makes explicit that Herbert's life itself transcended human understanding and language: his was "a life so full of Charity, Humility and all Christian virtues that it deserves the eloquence of St. Chrysostom to commend and declare it."[52] Herbert's readers can re-member their selves by reading *The Temple*, enabling them to forget these selves, so that they can be re-membered by Herbert and assume their appropriate places in God's creation. The parson's divine position "at spare times from action, standing on a hill, and considering his Flock" (*Priest* 264) is thus attributed to the poet, allowing him to precede his flock to silence, forgetting, and in short, to heaven.

To aid his status as experiential translator, Herbert's biography shows remarkable parallels with that of Christ,[53] who was considered a divine orator by his followers.[54] Herbert himself was the former public orator of Cambridge, who turned away from the world and towards God, to become the 'sweet singer of the Temple'. The actions of Christ gained their full significance after

[51] Walton, 223.
[52] Walton, 395.
[53] There are more parallels to be drawn to Biblical characters, most notably to David, presumed author of the Psalms. Less obvious are the connections to the Kings of Israel, cf. Diane Kelsey McColley's "'How all thy Lights Combine': Herbert and King's", in Wilcox and Todd (eds.) *George Herbert: Sacred and Profane* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1995) pp. 33-48. McColley notes the character of Solomon in this respect, "poet and Temple-builder as well as king." (36). Clearly, any analogy made by readers between Herbert and Biblical characters, positioning him as a character that fitted in with the typology that ran from the Old-Testament to Christ, could serve to strengthen the perception of this intermediary function.
[54] See Helen Wilcox, "Herbert's 'Enchanting Language': The Poetry of a Cambridge Orator", in *George Herbert Journal 27.1&2* (2003-2004): pp. 53-66.

his death and resurrection. Accordingly, Herbert's posthumous fame gave him the position of an author whose poems were frequently reconstructed as a voice out of time. After his death he was revived by those reading *The Temple*, just as Christ was revived in his followers. During the time in which he served the Anglican Church as a priest, he was in the final years of his life. The pattern of his 'biography' is thus similar to that of Christ: rising to marked holiness in his final years, at one with God, in the face of death.

*5.6 'Helpe thy selfe, and God will helpe thee'*

In the Gospels, Christ is reported to have said that "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."[55] A cognitive Herbertian poetics explains how this self-denial works out in daily practice, and how poetry can play a distinct part in this process. In his first sermon to his Bemerton community, as Walton recounts, Herbert preached on a text from the Proverbs 4:23, which reads "Keep thy heart with all diligence."[56] In Herbert's conception, one should remember oneself first, so that one can temper and forget oneself, in order to be remembered by God. This is the central paradox that informs Herbert's pastoral practice. Denying the self is impossible, as the self is a requirement for all forms of human cognition. The human experience of time and the human self cannot be separated; by means of the practice of temperance, however, they can be made to coincide. Music can achieve a temporary conjunction and calibration of selves: a shared cognitive activity by means of which minds share cognitive events. Tuning the self to God's music, mediated in *The Temple*, can serve to provide the conditions for the temporary conjunction of the self with God.

'Helping' oneself, then, is a process of constant healing, leaving out anything unnecessary in order to achieve balance in a changing world. As noted in the previous chapter, imbalance (change) is the basis of human cognitive processes: without it, the self ceases to exist. At best, the self can at times be denied and forgotten. To Herbert's frustration, repeatedly expressed in *The Temple*, life gets in the way of this process: he considers himself 'a thing forgot' ('Affliction IV', 3) when he is reminded of the functioning of his own memory, having to deal with change, and thus with the passions, the humours, and ultimately with himself. When he forgets himself, however, he can be remembered by God. As intermediary processes between heaven and earth, Herbert's poems thus fluctuate between self-construction and self-denial. The holiness of *The Temple* is secured, as it activates the former to enable the latter.

[55] Luke 9: 23.
[56] Walton, 400.

# chapter 6

## *Synthesising*

All things have their place, knew wee how to place them

Outlandish proverb 379

*6.1 Introduction*

My aim in this chapter is to outline the general principles of our cognitive perspective on *The Temple*, and connect it to the present state and development of the humanities, which is the discipline in which scholarly work on Herbert has traditionally been done. In the previous chapters I distilled Herbert's theoretical reflection from his treatises, reconstructing the function that he envisioned, and achieved, for *The Temple*. Aiming for an explanation of this function in chapter 4, I introduced a theory of culture and poetry as cognitive behaviour, a theory of the matters that Herbert, in his own time and terminology, was concerned with. Having applied this explanatory theory to Herbert's pastoral concerns in chapter 5, this final chapter should indicate the relevance of a Herbertian cognitive poetics for the humanities.

It seems to be a growing contention that the humanities operate isolated from other academic disciplines, separated, for instance, from research done on the mind and the origins of art in the cognitive sciences.[1] With this isolation comes the problem of *justification*, the impossibility of explaining to others why it is important to do humanistic research, as Geoffrey Harpman has indicated: "Humanistic scholars, conflicted and confused about their mission, suffer from an inability to convey to those on the outside and even to some on the inside the specific value they offer to public culture."[2] Apparently, it is much easier to establish the 'specific value' offered by the sciences; the modern world seems to accept the relevance of the sciences without hesitation, as

[1] For recent studies that chart this isolation, while attempting to mend it, see Jonathan Gottschall, *Literature, science, and a new humanities* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2008); E. Slingerland, *What science offers the humanities: Integrating body and culture* (CUP, 2008); Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[2] G. Harpman, "Beneath and beyond the 'crisis in the humanities'", in *New Literary History* 36.1 (2005), 21-36: p. 22. Since there is far more reflection available on the humanities as a whole than on the particular practice of interpreting *The Temple*, I will make the assumption here that what is true for the humanities is also true for Herbert-criticism, seeing that the latter has traditionally and institutionally been classified as taking part in the research programs of the former.

science appears to be a fundamental and unquestionable part of its identity. One significant way of strengthening the place of the humanities in public and academic life, which has frequently been explored, is to clarify its relation with the sciences. In this chapter I hope to discuss how the theoretical framework of chapter 4 can be employed to map this relation, aiming to survey, and possibly contribute to the position of the humanities.

A cognitive, scientific approach to literature can support research into 'literary universals',[3] aiming to discover the structure of literature, rather than interpret its meaning or experience its concrete form. These universals are to be sought in the structure of the cognitive processes that take place while reading and processing literature. The theory presented in chapter 4 builds on the confidence of the empirical sciences to provide these universals. The integration of the cognitive sciences with more traditional research in the humanities also ties in with a Herbertian stance towards the generation of knowledge. Employing all possible representational strategies that were at his disposal, Herbert conceived of his pastoral practice as a means towards 'unity'.[4] His striving for unity shaped his quest to reconcile his readers with the world, and ultimately with God, by means of tempering the body and the community. This quest, as argued below, is closely related to the rise and institutionalisation of early science, which occurred during Herbert's lifetime. Translating Herbert's aims to the present, the humanities could be relieved of their isolation, by striving for a *unity of knowledge*,[5] thus fully integrating its theorising, methodology and practice with the sciences, while preserving its unique qualities and traditions.

### *6.2 Studying* The Temple*: understanding and explaining*

Before we move on to these larger concerns, however, we should start by taking a closer look at the principles of this study, which can also serve to justify its peculiar arrangement. In the third chapter, I demonstrated how Herbert's modelling of the Christian life forms the basis for the intended working of his verse (itself the topic of chapter 2). In the fourth chapter, the lacunae necessarily left by Herbert in his Christian, Galenic theory were compensated by means of a theory of culture as cognition. In these chapters, then, the traditional hermeneutical method, the *interpretation* of texts, has been made subservient to an analysis, an *explanation* of the workings of *The Temple*. This different focus can explain why, in the preceding chapters, so few of Herbert's actual poems have appeared; a 'close-reading' method conflicts with an approach in which the structure of reading strategies is the object of study.[6]

[3] Cf. Gottschall 2008, and Patrick Colm Hogan, "Literary Universals," in *Poetics Today* 18 (1997): pp. 223-49.
[4] See Barnabas Oley, 'A Prefatory View of the Life of Mr. Geo. Herbert', in *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1983): p. 81.
[5] The term is E.O. Wilson's, see 6.6.
[6] Whenever Herbert's poems were included, I have tried to stay as much as possible with well-established interpretations of his work, not aiming to produce new readings of Herbert, but to place them in a coherent, explanatory structure.

Two cognitive strategies, then, interpretation and analysis,[7] have been combined in this study, with a clear dominance of analysis. Traditionally, interpretation has been associated with the humanities, while analysis is the dominant strategy of empirical science. In the humanities one assigns meaning to history, interpreting human behaviour of the past in the light of the present: the primary aim of the humanities is self-*understanding*.[8] In science, one's primary concern is not interpretation ('making meaning'), but the discovery of natural laws that can explain structural relations between observed phenomena. This is not to say that the humanities do not attempt to explain history, or that scientists do not interpret their data (of course they do: they have to use language to communicate and publish their research), but these cognitive strategies are subservient to others: in science, language is applied to formulate natural laws. Operating on the verge of the humanities and science, the cognitive sciences aim to tackle art, mind and culture with empirical methods, in a systematic investigation of human behaviour: self-*analysis*. The cognitive sciences, situated in a Darwinian paradigm which grounds our functioning in our evolutionary history, can thus generate explanations of art, modelling the structure of 'artistic phenomena' (cf. 1.3).[9] When analysing literary phenomena from a cognitive standpoint, as attempted in this study, one aims to discover the underlying structure of these phenomena, by logical inference from our cognitive make-up, which, in turn, is embedded in our evolutionary history. In terms of the Donaldian kinds of cognition the distinction between (self-) understanding and (self-) analysis can be rephrased. From this perspective, the humanities perform a mythic meta-cognitive function, whereas science tends to theoretic representation; the cognitive sciences, therefore, predominantly provide theoretic meta-cognition.

Traditionally, in the humanities the confines of language coincide with the confines of thought;[10] this is characteristic of mythic cognition. What has been termed poststructuralist critical theory tends to interpret the world as text,[11] with drastic consequences: human individuality has been questioned, as the mind was conceived of as governed and submerged

[7] Cf. Fish, Stanley. *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Cemtury Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1972), in which a similar distinction between 'taxonomic' and 'explanatory' concepts is made (xi).

[8] Cf. Volney P. Gay, *Progress and values in the humanities: Comparing culture and science* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010): pp. 23-8, and Harpham, 23-34.

[9] Cf. Shaun Gallagher, "Hermeneutics and the cognitive sciences," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11.10-11 (2004), 162-74: pp. 162-3; and Stephen Pinker, "Evolution and Explanation", foreword to *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, ed. David M. Buss (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons): xi-xvi. This distinction, between understanding and explaining, was earlier proposed by Wilhelm Dilthey, to mark the distinction between methods currently employed in the humanities (*Verstehen*) and in science (*Erklären*). See also G.H. von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), and Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation and Understanding in the Human Sciences* (Delhi: OUP, 1997) for contemporary applications of Dilthey's terminology.

[10] Cf. Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlts Enzyklopädie, 2006); and Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *The Writing of History*, eds. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison, Wisc., 1978): pp. 41-62.

[11] Cf. Slingerland, 79-81, and Brian Boyd, "Jane, meet Charles: Literature, evolution and human nature", in *Philosophy and Literature 22* (1998): pp. 1-30.

in discursive practices, exceeding individual control.[12] What is more, much of cognitive and evolutionary theory takes language as the key characteristic that distinguishes man from other animals.[13] Donald associates the centrality of language in thinking about the mind with modular models of mind, which hold that the unique properties of human cognition can be retraced to a Chomskian 'language device' in the brain.[14] This approach is appealing to literary scholars: a linguistic mind can easily be incorporated in the poststructuralist tradition that treats concepts as culture, identity and selfhood as textual entities.[15] This may explain the popularity of what we might term the 'cognitive linguistic' work of, for instance, Lakoff and Johnson in literary criticism.[16] Mythic systems are constituted in language-use and convention, regarding language as the basis of culture and the self. In literary criticism, this results in a tight relation with the object of research: language-use forms the basis of one's perspective on culture, while also being the object of interpretation. Stanley Fish's principle that "[s]peech (…) is the vehicle of the self"[17] can thus be taken as a central tenet of Herbert-criticism, which takes the structure of language as the structure of art and culture, while interpreting *The Temple* as an ideological 'site'.[18]

Theoretically, there is a clear distinction to be made between science and the humanities; methodologically, this distinction is often confused. In the humanities, one studies cultural artefacts in professionally controlled conversations, whereas scientific enquiry is primarily executed by means of systematic, controlled observations. Misleadingly, however, in current critical self-

[12] Cf. Brian Boyd, "Literature and Evolution: A Bio-cultural Approach". *Philosophy and Literature 29* (2005): pp. 1-23.

[13] A similar basis informed the work of Ernst Cassirer, Lev Vygotskij and Hans-Georg Gadamer. It is also evident in the reception theory of Wolfgang Iser, and finds its current cognitive version in Terrence Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Coevolution of Language and the Brain*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), and the work on conceptual blending of Turner and Fauconnier, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). See also Turner's *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), and *The Literary Mind* (New York: OUP. 1996), which start from the same linguistic or narrative basis of studying the mind.

[14] See Merlin Donald, "Mimesis and the Executive Suite: missing links in language evolution", in *Approaches to the Evolution of Language: Social and Cognitive Bases*, eds. Hurford et al. (CUP 1998), 44-67: pp. 45-6.

[15] Cf. Ellen Spolsky, "Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-structuralism", in *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010): pp. 292-310.

[16] Cf. Mary Thomas Crane, "Analogy, Metaphor, and the New Science: Cognitive Science and Early Modern Epistemology", in Zunshine (2010): pp. 103-114.

[17] Fish 1972, 189.

[18] Although mythic cognition is dominant in Herbert-criticism, it is by no means the only strategy at work. Mimetic cognition is also present, as we can derive from Sharon Cadman Seelig's *The Shadow of Eternity. Belief and Structure in Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1981). In her introduction to her interpretation of the poetry of Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne, discerning that in the work of her critical predecessors "various patterns have been asserted and denied, and each work has in its turn been called shapeless or chaotic", asserts that "this critical context should serve as a caveat against too hasty or easy discoveries of system. In approaching the text cautiously, as readers attempting to grasp the shape of a poet's work, we are engaged some ways analogous to the poet's attempt to perceive his world truly" (6).

reflection, the scientific method is used as a metaphor to describe the process of interpretation.[19] In mythic cognition, and thus in Herbert-criticism, self-reflection, that is, the reflection on one's interpretative practice, takes place by means of metaphors. A pervasive metaphor that gives shape to criticism is what Lakoff and Johnson have defined as "Understanding is seeing; IDEAS ARE LIGHT SOURCES; DISCOURSE IS A LIGHT-MEDIUM."[20] In the humanities, the acquiring of knowledge is often conceptualised as discovery, as making something visible, which was invisible before.[21] The metaphor 'Understanding is seeing' raises the suspicion that there is something to be 'seen' in the humanities' objects of research, and this is hardly the case: the accumulation of knowledge is not related to a literal, increased 'visibility' of the object under investigation.[22] One progresses by renewing professional 'ways of speaking', rather than 'seeing better' what is being studied.

As a critic reflecting on these matters, Stanley Fish has made some illuminating early remarks on the nature of literary criticism. In the concluding statements to *The Living Temple*, Fish acknowledges the mythic structure in which criticism generates knowledge, while retaining some of its traditional assumptions in his language. Fish takes his study of *The Temple* as a starting point to outline the structure of criticism:

> The 'facts of the matter' are never simply there waiting to be uncovered by some sufficiently transparent instrument; rather they come into view as a function of categories of understanding which already have a place marked out for them. Since some or other categories of understanding are always operating, there will always be facts, but they will not always be the same ones, and no set of them will have the status that would allow them to be cited as objective and independent proof. This does not mean that a structure of proof cannot be erected, but that its force will be system specific, and that someone who stands outside the system will remain unconvinced because the facts to which the argument refers will not be facts for him. If anyone is persuaded by my reading of *The Temple*, it will not be because he has assented to a disinterested marshalling of facts, but because he has been initiated into a way of seeing as a consequence of which the facts could not be otherwise than I report them. (172-3)

The conceptual framework that Fish chooses to employ, reader-response criticism, brings its own concepts and limitations. For instance, Fish makes a distinction between the poem, and the results produced by that poem,[23] not attempting to explain the (structural) 'literary' characteristics of the reader's literary experience. On the contrary, as he would have it, what makes the reading experience 'literary' is directed by the expectations and standards of a given 'interpretative

[19] Slingerland, 226-32.
[20] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980): p. 48.
[21] Slingerland 223-4.
[22] Cf. Gay, 8-10.
[23] Cf. Barbara Harman, *Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1982), pp. 18-20, for a comprehensive account of Fish's theoretical position.

community'.[24] Notably, going against his reflection on his interpretative work, Fish maintains that the literary object can be *seen*, critics are 'initiated into a way of seeing'. This, however, is at odds with the mythic structure of hermeneutics. In conceptual thought, there is nothing to be seen: meaning is constructed, not un-covered. Meaning is not inherent to the primary literary text, ready to be observed by the critical eye; meaning is a function of critical communities interpreting the text.[25]

In literary criticism, then, the object of research is obscure. For one, it can not be seen: literally taking a closer look at the words does not bring us closer to the meaning of the text. The text is a mental construction, and not 'out there', ready to be observed.[26] Quite distinct from scientific research, literary critics have to both re-create and interpret their object of research: "their mission is split between two kinds of important activity: they investigate and they make."[27] From a cognitive perspective, literary critics are thus inextricably intertwined with their objects of research, as the valuation and interpretation of literature (as a form of self-reflective cognition) is inevitably tied to how critics view themselves. The same holds true for the Herbert-tradition. When interpreting Herbert's poetry, his critics have to re-make it first. This re-creation is subsequently studied and interpreted, ultimately serving the purpose of understanding while reading.[28] The critic's task is to talk about this experience, within professional confines, and decide on its significance in interaction with others: 'literature' is thus explored in (mythic) conceptual frameworks – maintaining and using these frameworks is the primary task of criticism.[29] Since

[24] For an outspoken defence of this position, cf. Fish, *Is There a Text In This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[25] For early and influential accounts of this fundamental distinction, see also Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), which starts from the assumption that "[c]riticism can talk, and all the arts are dumb" (4), and T.S. Eliot : "*Qua* work of art, the work of art cannot be interpreted; there is nothing to interpret; we can only criticize it according to standards, in comparison to other works of art; and for 'interpretation' the chief task is the presentation of relevant historical facts which the reader is not assumed to know" ("Hamlet", in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 141-6: p. 142).

[26] Cf. Norman Holland, "Where is a Text? A Neurological View," in *New Literary History* 33.1 (2002): pp. 21-38.

[27] H. Porter Abbott, "Humanists, Scientists, and the Cultural Surplus," in *SubStance* 30.1/2 (2001), 203-19: p. 211.

[28] As Northrop Frye has remarked: "Criticism can account for it only in critical terminology, and that terminology can never recapture or include the original experience" (27). Separated from the poetic object, those involved in hermeneutic practice frequently express the desire to be re-united with the texts that they interpret. Heather Asals has remarked that "[from] personal experience I think it is fair to say that the scholar of Herbert's poetry undergoes once again, or recognizes, Herbert's many spiritual – literary combats" (*Equivocal Predication: George Herbert's Way to God* 3). Anthony Low, in the introduction to his *Love's Architecture: Devotional Modes in Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, expresses the desire to unite this poetic experience with his interpretation. In his introduction, which leads up to a discussion of strategies by means of which several early modern poets represented love in their work, Low states that he has "tried at every stage not only to interpret, which is the essence of the study, but to let the poetry guide that interpretation and speak for itself" (xi).

[29] To illustrate this practice, we can turn to the general introduction of *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, which makes clear that literary theorists conceptualize, rather than theorize, literature: "Another major question – 'what is literature'? – can be, and regularly is, answered by associating *literature* with such key terms as *representation*, *expression*, *knowledge*, *poetic* or *rhetorical language*, *genre*, *text*, or *discourse*" (In

self-consciousness is present in all of human cognition,[30] the 'critical self' (what this might entail is explored below) is inevitably part of the object of research. Put stronger, literary critics study, and conceptualise, their self-images while re-making poems from the past, thus interpreting their own (mimetic) self-constructions. Therefore, a cognitive analysis of *The Temple* should aim for the discovery of structure in how these self-constructions unfold. Critical readings are as much a part of the poetry of *The Temple* as contemporary readings, all belonging to the phenomena that require an explanation when we analyse Herbert's verse.

*6.3 The structure and limitations of Herbert-criticism*

Herbert's verse has been studied and interpreted extensively in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Herbert-criticism fits in with the general aims of the humanities, in that traditional Herbert-critics are aiming to understand *The Temple* by interpreting its contents in the context of its history, of the genres in which it may fit, or, more in general, of the traditions which it may continue. Hence, critical work on *The Temple* focuses predominantly on its possible meaning, not on its (historical) function in human lives and culture.[31] Having established that in the Herbert-tradition mythic thought is dominant, we can start to outline its structure. From a Donaldian perspective, language is based in interaction and communication. Similarly, we should assess critical interpretations as forms of communication between critics, as attempts at calibrating how texts ought to be read and placed. The position chosen by critics in relation to other critical readers determines the interpretations that are being produced. What is more, every (valid) reading of the text under investigation is part of this text, and should itself become the object of interpretation. Critics of *The Temple* are thus obliged to address previous readings and interpretations. Marion White Singleton's opening remark in her study of Herbert can serve to illustrate this practice:

> Herbert's recent critics have enabled us to hear many voices in *The Church*. All readers have experienced the delight and renewed insight of recognizing Stanley Fish's wily catechist, Richard Strier's subtle exponent of the doctrine of justification by faith, and Barbara Harman's narrator who so finely weighs the costs of self-representation. Each of these readers of *The Temple* has configured a distinct pattern of utterance and emphasis and persuaded us of its validity.[32]

*The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, eds. Leitch, Vincent B. et al. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001): p. 4).

[30] Cf. Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999): pp. 9, 20.

[31] Providing an outspoken assertion of this position, Debora Shuger has stated to be "primarily interested in the conceptual structures – the content of culture rather than its operations – and hence with how a given community *constructs* meaning and thereby constitutes its world rather than how such constructions enable it to function in the world" (in Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1990): p. 4).

[32] Marion White Singleton, *God's Courtier: Configuring a Different Grace in George Herbert's* Temple (Cambridge: CUP, 1987): p. 3.

The validity of one interpretation over another depends on persuasion, rhetorical skills, and the authority of the speaker. The latter is partly determined in the critical practice itself, by means of which one, as in any language practice, communicates messages, while negotiating social relations.[33] The 'voices' that White Singleton refers to belong to the critics who re-created Herbert in their own image; in turn, she is expected to reconsider these constructions, while making and interpreting her own. In this sense, every interpretation of *The Temple* is the result of collective practice. The 'true' meaning of the text that is being interpreted lies in the constant process of remaking (mimetic) self-constructions by means of Herbert's verse and interpreting these processes, rather than in one specific final reading. Nevertheless, critics continually search for true readings of texts,[34] and they have to: the truth-claims of their work result from the competition between persuasive interpretations. Reflecting from a cognitive perspective, this constant calibration and communication of poems and their possible meaning should be the main activity in Herbertian critical practice, as a predominantly mythic system of thought.[35]

As schematised in chapter 4, the natural outcome of mythic cognition is *myth*. Donald associates mythic cultures with overarching meta-narratives and organised religion. Religious and critical practice, then, would depend on similar cognitive structures. Robert Storey has stressed the mythic and communal aspects of the humanities, and connects its practice to religion: "The contemporary humanities are a church preserving a faith, a house, like Our Father's, having many rooms, in which the devout are invited to gather for ritual confessions of solidarity."[36] This connection can be retraced to the historical ties of the humanities with religion, which are still apparent in their shared concerns: both are normative practices that describe, or conceptualise, the nature, past, and future of the human species.[37] Interpretation (*understanding*) is a key practice both in ideological / religious and in critical debates. More specifically, in Herbert's time "hermeneutics became a weapon in ecclesiastical controversies," as shared practices of generating meaning were taken as cues to differentiate between religious factions.[38] Apart from this shared methodology, the Christian conception of knowledge is remarkably similar to that in the humanities. In the Christian tradition, as in the humanities (6.2), sight is treated as a metaphor for knowledge. In the Christian afterlife, sight and knowledge are identical; seeing and

[33] Cf. 4.4.

[34] Cf. Holland 2002.

[35] This insight is related to Mikhail Bakhtin's contention that, in dialogue, truth exists in the process itself, rather than in the statements produced in the dialogue. Bakhtin first explored this perspective in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art* (1929).

[36] Storey, *Mimesis and the Human Animal: On the Biogenetic Foundations of Literary Representation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996): p. 201.

[37] Gay, 19-22. For an early and concise exploration of the relation between humanism and religion, cf. T.S. Eliot, "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt", in *Selected Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951): pp. 471-480. See also Frye's remark in his 'Polemical Introduction' to *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which he makes the comparison between criticism and religion: "What critics now have is a mystery-religion without a gospel, and they are initiates who can communicate or quarrel, only with one another" (14).

[38] Joseph H. Summers, *George Herbert, His Religion and Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954): p. 79.

thus knowing God is the final destination of every Christian,[39] whereas, during an earthly life, God remains unknowable, and is thus not to be seen. As in the humanities, language-use occupies a central position in the Christian faith; it is the basis of creation in the Bible: in Genesis God creates the world by naming, or saying, it. Herbert-criticism thus appears to have a peculiar tie with its object of research (*The Temple* and its place in an early modern, largely religious, culture), being itself organised as a communal mythic practice. Ironically, then, recognising the structure of the mimetic, non-linguistic, character of Herbert's poems, so central to their intended function in his pastoral community, is hindered by the very nature of Herbert-criticism itself, in which one can find metaphors to conceptualise this character, without having the tools to discover and explain it.

In line with the structure of mythic recognition, the event that is being recounted and interpreted in criticism of *The Temple* is conceived of as both sacred and out of reach, and therefore, mysterious. Helen Vendler's *Invisible Listeners*, making a case for Herbert's ability to transform the 'vertical' relationship between the persona and God into a "horizontal address to a close friend" (9), sets out to explain how this transformation is achieved, revealing a glimpse of the status she assigns to Herbert's poetry:

> George Herbert, not finding in conventional prayer adequate verbal expressions of his relation to the divine, invents a new constellation of tones and structures with which to address a God who, though sometimes seeming to reside above the poet in an eternity inaccessible to human thought, more often resides (in the horizontal plane) not only within the poet's room but inside his heart, and, in an extraordinary way, inside poetry itself.[40] (4)

Vendler seems to set up the opposition between vertical and horizontal planes, in order to grasp the sacred nature of poetry. In analogy to the 'relation to the divine' she expresses her relation to poetic invention, the poet's heart, and the poetry itself as an attempt to grasp the 'extraordinary' nature of these entities – an attempt that is bound to fail, because poetry is sacred and transcends the practice of interpretation. In line with Vendler's example, the sacred status of poetry is reflected in an unspecific definition of poetry itself, which is usually maintained in critical practice by remaining implicit; apparently, 'poetry' should remain a mystery, out of reach of human understanding – more part of divine, transcendental spheres than the realm of human understanding.[41]

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[39] Cf. Marc De Mey, "Mastering Ambiguity", in *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford: OUP. 2006), 271-304: pp. 282-5.

[40] Helen Vendler, *Invisible Listeners* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[41] It is an interesting question to ask oneself *why* this sacred, divine status is assigned to poetry. I am not sure about the answer, but it may have to do with the critical profession acknowledging that it cannot, in principle, reveal the nature (or structure) of phenomena. Another possible route to an answer may be found in the strict hierarchical structure of criticism. If the object of research remains a mystery, truth-claims are strongly

As mythic recognition of Herbert's poetry, the modern critical tradition operates as the modern equivalent of doctrinal readings of *The Temple* in the seventeenth century. Barbara Harman, for instance, introduces her thesis by scrutinising the critical tradition, stating that "contradictory readings of Herbert are really a function of (…) divergent critical *beliefs*."[42] In the study of Herbert, this shared, mythic, mode of recognition may well result in a repeating of seventeenth-century doctrinal battles, as has been the case in Herbert-criticism. Richard Strier, in the introduction to his study of *The Temple*, which is based on his placing of Herbert in a Protestant tradition, contends that "[my] study suggests that we can grasp the human content of Herbert's poetry only through, not apart from, the theology. To grasp the human content of the poetry we must grasp the terms in which this content is expressed."[43] If Strier's suggestion holds true for a mythic, critical interpretation of *The Temple*, it does not cover the complete picture of ways in which we can study *The Temple*. In the previous chapters I have suggested that, apart from studying its contents, we should also address its (possibly mimetic) organisation. That is, we should not only assess what Herbert has to say, but also how it is being said. A cognitive theory of ways in which representations are generated ensures that we can determine the 'how' of Herbert's poems in terms of the workings of the human mind, thus revealing a possible structure of what heretofore had predominantly been conceptualised.

*6.4 Keeping mythic and theoretic cognition separate*

Parallel to the critical tendency to interpret historical artefacts as ideological 'sites', traditional criticism tends to conceive of empirical science as a set of ideological practices. The conception that the self is based in speech-acts is thus extended to the belief that *all* human knowledge (including science) must obey to linguistic structures. Stephen Greenblatt's mythic conception of culture, as a complex of codes and institutions, allowing "a metaphorical grasp of reality"[44] is thus extended to all forms of (self-) representation. In this vein, scholars working in the humanities often claim that explanation, or theoretic representation, is yet another form of interpretation: from this perspective, scientific practice rests on the invention and maintenance of conceptual frameworks which serve to categorise set experimental events.[45] However, from the perspective of a Donaldian theory of cognitive strategies, it can be deduced that ignoring the distinction between interpretation and explanation is only partly right. The process of cognitive evolution is *cumulative*, that is, theoretic representation is also, but not only, mythic, just as theoretic cultures

dependent on the authority of the speaker – that is on power-structures.

[42] Harman, *Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982): p. vii (italics my own). For Harman's mapping of the critical tradition, see 1-39.

[43] Richard Strier, *Love Known. Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983): p. xxi. In his 'Afterword' (253-4 ) Strier expresses a similar conviction.

[44] Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980): p. 4.

[45] Cf. Gallagher, and Slingerland, 60-2.

built on and refined the mythic cultures that preceded them. Naturally, scientists make use of language to do scientific work. Scientific knowledge, however, transcends the conventions and codes to which language use is bound, thus offering a form of representation that goes beyond language.

Critical meta-thinking (conceptual thought) and empirical theory, then, are different and should, within the confines of a cognitive perspective, be distinguished;[46] critical thinking makes use of established 'way of speaking', conceptual frameworks agreed upon by professional critics, whereas empirical theory builds on sets of laws, claimed to be universally true, formulating structural relations between phenomena and events. Critical thought is essentially based on informed beliefs.[47] Empirical theory starts from the same basis of shared sets of beliefs, visualising these conceptual frames, deducing hypotheses, and putting these to the test of systematic observation. Confusingly, however, the term 'theory' is often used interchangeably to refer to both critical thought and empirical theory in interdisciplinary approaches to culture. In the humanities, the term 'theory' is often employed as a concept denoting conceptual frameworks. Literary theory comes close to Donald's conception of myth: both function as overriding meta-narratives, by means of which one can produce more precise narratives regarding the meaning of (literary) events. To Stanley Fish, for instance, producing theories is not fundamentally different from the practice of interpretation,[48] and from a cognitive perspective this is not surprising: in mythic cultures one's meta-narratives determine one's (shared) interpretations. Empirical theory, on the other hand, is not merely a meta-narrative, but rather a predominantly theoretic cognitive strategy, in which interpretation is subservient to explanation.[49]

Critical approaches to science often fail to make this distinction, focusing instead on the specific historical contexts in which scientific knowledge is produced, thus attacking its claims to universal truth (treating it as a mere conventional system, bound to place and time). Slavoj Zizek's assessment of the treatment of science in cultural studies is very accurate in this respect:

> When a typical cultural theorist deals with a philosophical or psychoanalytical edifice, the analysis focuses exclusively on unearthing a hidden patriarchal, Eurocentrist, identitarian 'bias.' The theorist does not even ask the naïve but nonetheless necessary question, OK, but what *is* the structure of the universe? How *is* the human psyche 'really' working? Such questions are not even taken seriously in cultural studies, since its proponents simply tend to reduce them to the historicist reflection on conditions in which certain notions emerged as the result

[46] For the difference between critical and empirical conceptions of 'theory', see Slavoj Zizek, "Cultural Studies versus the 'Third Culture'", in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.1 (Winter 2002), 19-32: pp. 19-20.
[47] For an argument that makes this connection, see Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory", in *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1982): pp. 723-42.
[48] Cf. Stanley Fish, *The Living Temple: George Herbert and Catechizing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1978): p. 137.
[49] Cf. 4.5 and 6.2.

> of historically specific power relations. Furthermore, in a typical rhetorical move, cultural studies denounces the very attempt to draw a clear line of distinction between, say, true science and prescientific mythology, as part of the Eurocentrist procedure to impose its own hegemony by means of the exclusionary discursive strategy of devaluating the Other as not-yet-scientific (24-5).

This reducing of the sciences to myth is characteristic of critical thought; in this tradition, one addresses the historical context in which scientific knowledge has been acquired, deconstructing its ideological bases, thus licensing a mythologisation of the scientific pursuit.[50] The authors contributing to *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, a historical survey of early scientific endeavours, provide a good example of this procedure.[51] In their introduction to this study, which offers a reading in which early modern thinkers concerned with the emotions are interpreted in their historical, ideological contexts, the authors start from the assumption that theories of the mind and the emotions work with 'normative scripts', which should be accounted for to describe the ideological setting of the rise of early scientific theory. According to the authors, modern science that concerns itself with the emotions reflects persistent ideologies in Western thinking. The authors lament "the linguistic inadvertence of philosophers and psychologists who wish – in vain, we think – to break through the veil of language to prior or non-linguistic truth about the emotions,"[52] thus defending their own mythic position and, in effect, by advocating the centrality

[50] Shaun Gallagher's assessment of the sciences can serve to illustrate this rhetorical strategy:

> The practice of science is itself hermeneutical. That is, scientists make interpretations, and their interpretations are biased in a very productive way by the scientific tradition to which they belong, and the specific kinds of questions they ask. Explanation is no less interpretation than understanding. The interpretation of quantitative data, for example, relies on certain developments in the history of science, and on qualitative judgments among scientists, including judgments that the way they interpret their data is important and valuable for the community of scientists and the funding agencies that constitute part of their audience (164).

By blurring the distinctions between hermeneutics and scientific practice, understanding and explanation, in short: between mythic and theoretic cognition, Gallagher contributes to a mythologisation of science.

[51] Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Passions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For a similar instance of this perspective and resulting interpretations of early modern science, cf. Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature: The Art of Making Knowledge, 1580-1670* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004). Spiller argues that writers of 'imaginative fiction' and early modern scientists (natural philosophers) were in their own time fictionalised as representing fundamentally different activities, whereas she claims that these categorical distinctions are "historically and culturally specific, ones that are invented as we understand them sometime during the seventeenth century" (1), thus masking that both early modern artists and scientists were making use of similar discursive practices. From a cognitive perspective, this is quite right; it should be added, however, that in artistic (mimetic) and scientific (theoretic) practice, discourse is subservient to other representational strategies (and not the other way around, as Spiller would have it).

[52] Kern Paster et al., "Introduction: Reading the Early Modern Passions", 1-20: p. 9. The authors' reducing of the arts and sciences to language practices is also evident in their opening statement: "Early modern imaginative literature and experimental science are inventions of a startling new attention to knowledge: they represent new ways of thinking, new understandings of how man could create knowledge, and new ways of writing that try to recreate those ideas for readers" (1). Reducing knowledge to ways of 'understanding'

of language in the representation of history, their own discipline and self-image (and thus their authority).

In general, Herbert-critics seem to comply with this perspective, proposing to interpret the poems of *The Temple* as entities that produce, and are part of, some kind of ideology – which particular one is up to the critic. In some readings this happens overtly, as in Cristina Malcolmson's concluding remarks to her study of *The Temple*:

> The lyrics display the same struggle between old and new ideologies. (…) What is excluded is not simply the new ideology of the self-made man; Herbert's lyrics also reject the pleasures of high status. What is included is not simply the old ideology of submission to hierarchical authority; the poetry also posits human internality as the site of communion with the divine, a claim to a classless subject-position, one precursor to our belief in 'individuality'.[53]

Malcolmson thus acknowledges modern ideology as a belief, interpreting *The Temple* as a site in which competing ideologies collide. It thus appears that when working with a mythic cognitive strategy to interpret culture, one must accept that (1) all culture is ideology, and therefore (2) poetry is ideology, and, most importantly, (3) these cultural practices are forms of 'belief' that depend on authority and persuasion – on nothing more than informed opinions.

Conversely, those reflecting on the nature of human knowledge from empiricist, scientific positions often judge the humanities by their own theoretical and methodological standards. For a popular and recent example we can turn to Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006).[54] In this book, Dawkins shows that he is unwilling to separate empirical science from myth. To Dawkins, religion is a mere meme (and not very helpful one), a communal virus transmitted from one generation to the next according the principles of natural selection.[55] In *The God Delusion*, Dawkins sets out to unveil and destroy, to 'de-mythologise', this meme. In the second and fourth chapter of the book, entitled 'The God Hypothesis' and 'Why there almost certainly is no God' respectively, Dawkins judges religion by empirical standards – and, unsurprisingly, religion fails to meet these. Dawkins' method and tone is exemplary for other recent attacks on mythic thought. In cognitive and evolutionary approaches to art and culture, a similarly hostile position

coincides with the tendency to take mythic social practices as the blueprint for human culture.

[53] Cristina Malcolmson, *Heart-Work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999): 220.

[54] Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006, New York, NY; Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008).

[55] Memetic theory presents human culture as encoded in memes. This theory is based on an analogy between the Neo-Darwinist view on the survival of genes and the structure of culture. Reproduction comes with imitation, resulting in variation. The principle of selection prescribes that those memes survive that fit our innate predisposition. See Nick Chater, "Mendelian and Darwinian Views of Memes and Cultural Change", in *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science. Volume 2: Imitation, Human Development and Culture*, eds. Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Mit Press, 2005): pp. 355-62. For another recent account of the evolutionary origins of religion, based in meme-theory, cf. Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

is assumed towards the humanities, and on similar grounds.[56] In his evolutionist study *Mimesis and the Human Animal*, Robert Storey builds his argument on the principle that "we [humans] are fairly stable and predictable creatures, with an identifiable 'human nature', because we are servants of the gene."[57] Storey subsequently seeks to ground literary criticism and theory in the findings of empirical science. For not fitting into this perspective, Foucault (representative of a more traditional, mythic kind of thought) is an 'ass': Storey holds it against him that the poststructuralist traditions that resulted from the authority of Foucault's generation could only analyse differences, while denying the universal laws of human behaviour.[58]

If we review both the critical remarks on science and the empiricist attacks on religion and the humanities, both parties seem to judge the other by their own cognitive standards. Following our Donaldian logic, however, we should claim that religion and science strive for different kinds of representation and truth;[59] there is little sense in debunking the Other from one's own one-dimensional, reductionist perspective. The truth of religion, attacked by Dawkins, consists in its communal practices, whereas scientists profess to formulate such laws by applying the mechanisms of empirical methods. Observing these differences would greatly help the mutual understanding and respect between those working in the humanities and the sciences, which, eventually, should aid a better communication and integration of these disciplines.

### *6.5 The scientific revolution*

Herbert's own time saw a similar concurrence and drifting apart of religion and science. The so-called Scientific Revolution, the early modern precursor of modern science, arose in a culture that was deeply religious.[60] This historical development is usually associated with the groundbreaking work of Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642), Kepler (1571-1630), Harvey (1578-1657), Boyle (1627-91), and Newton (1642-1727), who tested traditional, essentially medieval knowledge with new empirical methods.[61] Their revolutionary observations

[56] This hostility reached a climax in the 'science wars' of the 1990s, between scientific objectivists and postmodernists, most notably in the 'Sokal-affair', centered around a hoax article written by Alan Sokal, which was supposedly in defense of interpretative strategies in the natural sciences. The original article is Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity", in *Social Text* 46/47: pp. 217-252. See also Sokal et al. (eds.) *The Sokal hoax: The Sham that Shook the Academy* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

[57] Robert Storey, *Mimesis and the Human Animal: On the Biogenetic Foundations of Literary Representation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996): p. 60.

[58] Storey, 59.

[59] Cf. Stephen Jay Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999). Gould coined the term 'non-overlapping magisteria' to describe that there are fundamental differences between science and religion, each discipline with its own mode and object of enquiry.

[60] Cf. Floris Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry* (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1994). Cohen argues that early modern science arose as a combination of a revival of Greek, rational thought and a Biblical reverence for discipline and manual labour, which can account for the invention and systematic testing of the laws of nature.

[61] Cf. Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). These early scientists provided the basis of new 'mechanistic' explanations of the natural world. They are associated with

and theories marked "the shift from an essentially medieval 'world picture' dominant through the sixteenth century to the incipient modernity of the new science that began its ascendance in the seventeenth century."[62] In Donaldian terms, the scientific revolution marks the transition from mythic to theoretic dominance in (early-) modern culture, resulting in a *mechanisation* of the ways in which cultures reflected on the world and the human body.[63] In early science, the basing of knowledge in analogies and metaphorical thought was gradually replaced by a system that incorporated systematic observations to test speculative thought.[64] Whereas analogical systems were good at representing the order of things, by constructing resemblances between concepts, the new mechanistic theories could account better for disorder and change – the (mechanical) dynamics of reality.[65] The aims of this early scientific pursuit are closely related to Herbert's strife for temperance, as "control of the passions (…) became, for the seventeenth century, a means of achieving control over the natural world."[66] A radically new way of looking at the dynamics of the passions could provide this control.

Donald has described *demythologisation* as characteristic for shifts from mythic to theoretic governance. During this process, communally approved conceptual representations of reality (myths) are schematised, from which hypotheses can be derived which are systematically put to the test of empirical observation.[67] Theoretic cognition aims at disconnecting a conceptual apparatus from its users; the empirical method gradually replaces the mythic strategy of calibrating concepts within a community of minds as a method for generating knowledge: analysis increasingly governs language use. During the process of demythologisation, art can gradually separate itself from religion, and begin to serve an autonomous purpose: mimetic representation can show the mechanics of reality at work. In predominantly mythic cultures, mimesis is usually repressed, as one tends to be less interested in dynamics, focusing more on

heliocentrism, astronomy, the laws of planetary motion, the systemic circulation of blood, chemistry, and physics, respectively.

[62] Crane 2010, 103.

[63] Cf. E.J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture* (Oxford: Clarendon. 1961); and Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995). Focussing on anatomy-practices, Sawday argues that the sudden increasing interest in the dissection of human bodies marked a shift from considering body and soul as a unified whole, towards investigating the mechanics of the human body. Sawday presents this shift as a specific instance of the meeting of old and new science.

[64] For a description of the first, cf. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002): pp. 19-45, 74-78, and Tillyard 1970, 83-100. For the mechanism of speculative thought, and falsification by means of systematic observation, cf. Popper 1965; Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Lakatos and Musgrave (Cambridge University Press, 1970): pp. 91-195. This is not to imply that this mechanism emerged in the early modern period in opposition to religious thought. On the contrary, early empirical endeavours were deeply rooted in religion.

[65] Cf. Crane 2010, 106-7.

[66] Peter Harrison, "The Fall, the Passions, and Dominion over Nature", in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Stephen Gaukroger (London: Routledge, 1998): pp. 49-78.

[67] See Donald, *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991): pp. 269-75.

maintaining order and *stasis*. As an example, Arnold Hauser has pointed out the didactic character of early Christian visual art, which functioned as sensual representation to bring doctrine to the masses. Characteristically, Christian (mythic) art is *symbolic*: it serves the purpose of upholding the salvation doctrine, the narratives, of Christian religion.[68] In these cases, the artistic event is subservient to its interpretation – meaning is dominant over experience. During the Renaissance, as Hauser has indicated, the predominantly symbolic nature of art gave way to more realistic modes of representation,[69] a development occurring in Herbert's day and age. Whereas scientists sought to describe the underlying laws of events, artists explored the dynamics of reality, no longer primarily concerned with the meaning of their work, but rather aiming at the representation of 'unique and unrepeatable experience'.[70] Despite the largely mythic, religious organisation of Herbert's England, then, the early modern demythologisation of knowledge resulted in a more open arena, in which mimetic, mythic, and theoretic kinds of knowledge could find their own place.

Early modern science, however, although re-introducing theoretic dominance, was still deeply influenced by religion. To illustrate this, Peter Harrison has suggested that the Reformation and the rise of early science were directly related. The protestant, literal approach to Scripture coincided with a quest to understand the Book of Nature more precisely.[71] Elsewhere, Harrison argues that the protestant insistence on the fallen state of mankind, and the pursuit of regaining the paradisiacal Adamic state, lead to early empirical research in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[72] Early modern science was made to fit in the Christian narrative, as a means towards *reconciliation*: an attempt to restore order in a world fallen to disorder. From this perspective, Herbert's pastoral modelling of society can be understood as a similar attempt to restore order, fitting in with larger cultural developments. Herbert attempted to describe and control the mechanisms of the Christian life. Apart from assigning the proper meaning to this life (which is a mythic cognitive strategy), he also wanted to grasp its dynamics, exploring its laws in his prose treatises, while showing it at work in *The Temple*.

### *6.6 Unity of knowledge*

Since their original separation in the Renaissance, science and religion have grown increasingly apart. There is, however, a modern, frequently expressed, urge to re-unite mythic and theoretic,

[68] Cf. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art. Volume I: From Prehistoric times to the Middle Ages* (1951. London and New York: Routledge, 1999): pp. 109-15.
[69] Cf. Hauser, *The Social History of Art. Volume II: Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque* (1951. London and New York: Routledge, 1999).
[70] E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961): p. 173. See also Paul Oppenheimer, *The Birth of the Modern Mind: Self, Consciousness and the Invention of the Sonnet* (New York: OUP, 1989), which draws a similar parallel between the evolution of poetry and early scientific pursuits (in this case between the invention of the sonnet and early attempts at systematic observation to oppose Church- and ancient authority at the court of Frederick II (1194-1250)).
[71] Cf. Peter Harrison. *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (CUP, 1998).
[72] Cf. Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science* (CUP, 2007).

'humanistic' and scientific, thought.[73] To date, this quest has proven only partly successful: whereas the social sciences are progressively founded in scientific theory, joining forces with the natural sciences (rather than discrediting this work as mere modern, Western ideology), the humanities largely resist scientific theory.[74] Connections, however, are being made in the margin; they also take place in the integration of literary / cultural criticism with the cognitive sciences and thus with evolutionary thinking.[75] In his study *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (1998),[76] E.O. Wilson has outlined the conditions under which the humanities can join forces with science. Wilson employs the term consilience to denote "literally a 'jumping together' of knowledge by the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation."[77] The interpretative practices characteristic of the humanities can thus be guided by scientific theory, without changing their procedures. Interpreting history on scientific bases allows one to profit from the increasing precision of explanatory theories: it allows, "given even modest success, the value of understanding the human condition with a higher degree of certainty."[78]

To achieve this, Wilson states, "[s]cholars in the humanities should lift the anathema placed on reductionism."[79] In scientific theorising, reductionism is not a weakness but a strength: one needs to reduce concrete events to abstractions in order to discover the laws that underlie those events. In the humanities, reductionism is suspect, and indeed, one should not aim to reduce history to a mere set of laws. A unity of mythic and theoretic knowledge should enable one to account both for the historically unique manifestations and the underlying laws of culture. This would bring us closer to the way in which culture was studied in Herbert's own time. Outlining the current dominance of post-modern theory and practice in literary criticism, Robin Wells has contended that the essentialism and reductionism that was inherent to early modern humanist thought has vanished from present research conducted in the humanities.[80] Current critical theory shies away from making universalist statements about the conditions of mankind; if we

[73] See, for example, Joseph Caroll, "'Theory,' Anti-Theory, and Empirical Criticism," in Turner and Cooke (eds.), *Biopoetics; Evolutionary Explorations in the Arts* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House Publishers, 1999): pp. 138-154.

[74] Cf. Jiro Tanaka, "Consilience, Cultural Evolution, and the Humanities", in *Philosophy and Literature* 34.1 (2010): pp. 32-47.

[75] Cf. Alan Richardson, "Studies in Literature and Cognition: A Field Map." *The Work of Fiction: Cognition, Culture, and Complexity*, eds. Richardson and Spolsky (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004): pp. 1-30; Ellen Spolsky, "Cognitive Literary Historicism: A Response to Adler and Gross," in *Poetics Today* 24.2 (2003): pp. 161-83; Alan Richardson and Francis Steen, "Literature and the Cognitive Revolution: An Introduction." *Poetics Today* 23.1 (2002): pp. 1-8; T. Jackson, "Questioning interdisciplinarity: Cognitive science, evolutionary psychology and literary criticism," in *Poetics Today* 21.2 (2000): pp. 319-47; Mary Thomas Crane and Alan Richardson, "Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity," *Mosaic* 32.2 (1999): pp. 123-40.

[76] E.O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

[77] Wilson 1998, 8.

[78] Wilson 1998, 9.

[79] Wilson 1998, 234.

[80] Cf. R.H. Wells, *Shakespeare's Humanism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).

want to grasp Herbert's life and work (and arguably, that of his contemporaries), we should aim to re-unite mythic and theoretical thought.

Many current attempts to unite cognitive science with cultural criticism do not, and do not aim to achieve a Wilsonian merging of interpretation and analysis. Usually, one of these cognitive strategies is dominant over the other. In more traditional interdisciplinary work, myth governs this union, as is the case in *cognitive criticism* (where concepts derived from cognitive science are applied to interpret historical artefact),[81] and in *cognitive cultural studies* (where these concepts are applied to describe the history of culture).[82] Both of these disciplines appear to retain their dominant mythic traits. As examples of this newly formed tradition, Barash and Barash, in their *Madame Bovary's Ovaries* (2006), employ the theory of evolution to explain and validate their readings of the literary canon. Conceiving of (their interpretations of) literature as a mirror of reality, they proceed to judge the universal value of their readings against the theory of evolution. In this sense readings can be 'explained', and validated, proven right.[83] Scientific theory is thus made subservient to the practice of interpretation; it functions as a final ruler, by means of which one can distinguish 'right' from 'wrong' interpretations. This approach, however, would not help our grasp of Herbert: we require cognitive theory to explain how interpretations can come about, and how these practices can be distinguished from the (mimetic) experience of poetry. In case of Herbert and *The Temple*, then, the particular strength of evolutionary and cognitive theory lies in the explanations it can offer for the functioning of art in culture, not in validating specific readings of Herbert's verse.

Aiming to distinguish the validation of interpretations by means of scientific research, and the grounding of the study of art in the natural sciences, Alan Richardson has indicated the fundamental difference between *interdiscursive* and interdisciplinary research.[84] In interdiscursive literary studies, categories currently employed in the empirical sciences are being incorporated in the 'ways of speaking', the categorical frameworks, of cultural studies. Typically, in this kind of merging of disciplines, the theory of evolution is being treated as (a valuable kind of) ideology, a powerful story: as Ellen Spolsky has made clear, one assesses "the value of Darwin's theory as a description and not as an explanation of change and adaptation."[85] In interdisciplinary research, however, critical discourse is grounded in the findings of the natural sciences; in this strand,

[81] For recent instances of cognitive interpretations of (early modern) literature, see Paul M. Matthews and Jeff McQuain. *The Bard on the Brain. Understanding the Mind through the Art of Shakespeare and the Science of Brain Imaging* (New York, NY: Dana Press, 2003); Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare and Cognition; Aristotle's Legacy and Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Routledge. 2006); Mary T. Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[82] For the premises of the latter, see Lisa Zunshine, "What is Cognitive Cultural Studies?" in Zunshine (2010): pp. 1-33.

[83] Cf. David P. Barash and Nanelle R. Barash. *Madame Bovary's Ovaries: A Darwinian Look at Literature* (New York, NY: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 2006).

[84] Alan Richardson, *The Neural Sublime: Cognitive Theories and Romantic Texts* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010): p. x.

[85] Spolsky 2010b: 307.

scientific theory is not considered as mere ideology, but as offering a basis which hermeneutics itself cannot provide. As outlined above, the fundamental difference between science and cultural theory is the ability of science to eliminate false answers, whereas cultural theory can only formulate new answers, to be rejected and validated by popular demand.[86] Ideally, the scientific method aims at the falsification of theory, through the systematic testing of hypotheses.[87] Building on scientific theories in an interdisciplinary manner (in Richardson's sense), one can explain literary phenomena by means of these theories, while retaining and validating the practice of interpretation, as one of these phenomena.

In a truly interdisciplinary sense, then, *Consilience* is not the 'paradigm-shift', repeatedly called for in recent works in cognitive and evolutionary criticism.[88] This terminology would inevitably enforce the kind of 'interdiscursivity' that warrants no sound connection with linear, scientific progress. Following Wilson's proposal, the humanities can most fruitfully apply cognitive and evolutionary theory in a kind of 'vertical integration',[89] in which empirical theory forms the basis of research in the humanities, without mingling directly with the terms employed in interpretative practices. A quantitative basis, in this respect, does not cohere with the 'literary science', or 'quantitative literary research' that Jonathan Gottschall has recently called for.[90] Gottschall's aim is to model critical methodologies after science, by following scientific procedures. This aim, however, is grounded in the suggestion that there is no fundamental difference between the objects of research of the humanities and of science, and that both can be studied with similar means. Moreover, as Gay has pointed out, it is difficult to establish whether we can speak of 'progress' in the humanities at all. Scientific enquiry proceeds in a more or less linear fashion (towards theories which are better at explaining phenomena than the theories that preceded them), whereas humanists may restore and discard authorities (and their ideas) from the past, seemingly as they please.[91]

From an evolutionary perspective, the pragmatic approach of scientists, finding out which theories work best with the observed data, is justifiable: the scientific method resembles the acquiring of fitness ('good-enough' methods of survival) to cope with one's changing surroundings.[92] The evolutionary rationale for criticism, however, is less clear. Translating Abbott's suggestion (cf. 6.2) to literary criticism, critics make readings and interpret them at the

[86] See Brian Boyd, "Literature and Evolution: A Bio-cultural Approach", in *Philosophy and Literature 29* (2005), 1-23: pp. 2-3.
[87] For the classical defence of this position, see Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations. The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (New York: Basic Books, 1965); and Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Lakatos and Musgrave (CUP, 1970): pp. 91-195.
[88] Gottschall 2008, xi-xii.
[89] Slingerland, 295.
[90] Cf. Gottschall 2008. For the possibility of grounding interpretative practices in empirical methods, see also Siegfried Schmidt, "Interpretation: The Story Does Have an Ending," in *Poetics Today* 21.4 (2000): pp. 621-32.
[91] See Gay, 54-5.
[92] Cf. Slingerland, 221-49.

same time. This is why the model of linear progress cannot work in literary criticism: earlier readings and interpretations become part of texts, and thus of the objects of research. Literary scholars translate earlier readings of texts to their own context and time, re-making them, and re-assessing their value and meaning. These dynamics are remarkably similar to Herbert's Christian notion of time (and with good reason, as both Christianity and criticism are mythic systems).[93] Both Herbert and present-day literary critics aim at re-making and applying texts from the past; these readings are constantly renewed as time progresses, while their meaning is re-established for the purpose of self-understanding. This, however, has very little to do with progress in the scientific sense: meaning is rather the result of the continual process of readers' self-constructions. The world changes, it does not progress, and the meaning of historical artefacts changes with it.

Rather than copying the methods of the empirical sciences, then, literary studies should turn to the natural, cognitive sciences for the justification of their creative, interpretative practices. In consilient criticism, non-falsifiable literary theory should not be abandoned altogether, but recognised for what it is: an agreement between critics to legitimate ways of re-creating, and speaking about, art and culture. In traditional art-criticism, art often has a sacred status, and so does the tradition itself: "[c]ommon-sense traditional views of art and literature have easily shaded into transcendental views."[94] This status does not have to be abandoned altogether, if it could be complemented with more rational, systematic approaches to art and culture. In the preceding chapters, a suchlike attempt at consilience has been made, first by describing the intentions for, and the reception of, Herbert's poetry, placing these poems in the pastoral context in which they were produced and read. Subsequently, in the fourth chapter, this description was grounded in a theory of culture as cognition, which allowed both a reconstruction of Herbert's culture and of the place of his poetry within that culture. In this sense, art was treated as a (mimetic) reflection on culture.[95] By adding a scientifically grounded model of culture and art, it has been possible to provide an explanatory basis of this description, resulting in a possible explanation of the intended working of Herbert's poetry in the context of his pastoral life.

### *6.7 'All things have their place, knew wee how to place them'*

George Herbert united a structural with a historically specific outlook on human life: he was interested in the universal characteristics of mankind in general, while focusing on individual lives. In Herbert conception, the two perspectives, universalist and historicist, did not contradict each other: every human being is made by God – equal yet unique. Valuing the saying that 'all

[93] Cf. 5.2.

[94] Boyd 2005, 1.

[95] This is a basic procedure in the study of historical art. For modern approaches in this tradition, see Ellen Spolsky, *Word vs Image: Cognitive Hunger in Shakespeare's England* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Henry S. Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts 1580-1630* (Oxford: OUP, 2006). The classical work that analyses literature in the light of cultural change and differences is Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953).

things have their place, knew wee how to place them', he showed a clear concern not just for the proper place of things, but for the human activity of *placing things properly*. In this chapter, I sought to indicate that in the humanities and science two distinct methods of placing are dominant: interpretation and analysis, respectively. The cognitive theory of culture presented earlier vindicates this distinction in the fundamental separation between mythic and theoretic cognition. By not acknowledging and cultivating the gap between the mythic and the theoretic, confusion may arise, as indicated above. It is peculiar, yet understandable, that Herbert-criticism takes language-use as the basic building-block of human culture, seeing Herbert's suspicion of human language and doctrine. The Word was sacred to Herbert; similarly, the implicit or explicit assumptions of culture and the self are sacred to the humanities: so much so that discussion about these phenomena is often deemed irrelevant. Herbert expected his readers to re-create his poems, before they could be put to use. It is clear that he did not consider his poems as objects; rather, they existed only if read and used frequently – as 'ways of doing things'.

The beginnings of the scientific revolution occurred during Herbert's life. Although based in Galenic 'old' science, Herbert shows a clear fascination with the mechanics of the human body and of the Christian community, displaying their mechanics, and strategies to control these, in his prose treatises. In *The Temple* he shows these mechanics at work. As much concerned with disorder as with order, Herbert offered a possibly subversive example in his pastoral writings and activities. He acknowledged the flux and open-endedness of life, reflected in the structure of *The Temple*, in which the ongoing battle against the elements is proclaimed in *The Church Militant*, following the incessant internal struggles and divine resolves in *The Church*. Herbert's reliance on Scripture may have prompted his meticulous studying of the Book of Nature, the pastoral reflection "at spare times from action, standing on a hill, and considering his Flock". His quest for 'the parsons completenesse' finds its parallel in the attempts at merging cognitive science with literary, historical criticism. By questioning the centrality of language in the mind, his pre-Cartesian conception of the embodied mind and soul is reflected in the current post-Cartesian attempts at grounding cognition in the working of the body.

# chapter 7

## *Conclusion*

Many things are lost for want of asking

Outlandish proverb 968

*7.1 Reviewing*

In this study I have proposed a reconsideration of the poetry of *The Temple* as cognitive behaviour, performed and shared by Herbert and his readers. A conception of *The Temple* as cognitive process ties in with the function that Herbert envisaged for his verse. Herbert's poetic goals can be deduced from his treatises and from the poetics that comes to the fore through the poems of *The Temple*; he succeeded in offering this intended poetic process to his readers, as can be deduced from the many contemporary (written) responses to *The Temple*. His pastoral poetics centred around the beneficial transformation of the readers, a process requiring three distinct stages, as identified in the second chapter: (1) the establishment of a poetic space in which Herbert and his readers could and still can meet in one-to-one interaction (2); an active involvement of readers, who need to make Herbert's verse 'their own' if it is to achieve its function, which is: (3) to have a beneficial effect on readers' lives, achieved through the teaching of self-knowledge in poetic forms. Ultimately, this poetic process served the purpose of temperance – corporeally based self-restraint. The individual tempering of behaviour should ensure a lasting harmony in Herbert's ideal pastoral, Christian community. As a thinker, Herbert made no real distinction between individuals and the community. While each Christian individual was to enact the all-encompassing Christian narrative by following Christ, Herbert conceived of the pastoral community as a single organism, the earthly counterpart of Christ, and the lived continuation of God's elected people. The discarding of conceptual dichotomies – between individual and community, body and soul, 'affliction' and resolve – is characteristic of Herbert. Rather than opposing concepts, he sought to integrate them in fluent life-like representations.

The strategies available to restrain the self, providing the possibility to direct one's life to God's will, constitute the main topic of Herbert's prose works. The treatises offer general perspectives on the means available to control oneself. Herbert heralds one activity in particular, 'temperance',

as the main strategy to control behaviour. Temperance is the safeguarding of order, controlling the condition of one's body, mind and soul, by according one's behaviour to the rules of conduct of a Christian society. In line with his thinking, the poetry of *The Temple* can be understood as a specific strategy towards the achieving of temperance. Herbert thus seeks to impose order on life, making use of the distinct qualities of poetry. As Herbert, in the guise of an idealised parson, was 'tuned', or restored to order, by his religious life, his readers should be similarly affected by means of his verse. Both as parson and as poet Herbert assumed the role of a physician, attempting to heal pastoral communities, by re-making their individual members in the image of Christ. By means of *The Temple*, Herbert attempts to heal his readers, showing how he was wounded and healed himself, inviting others to relive his experiences for the benefit of their souls.

To ground and explain Herbert's model of the working of *The Temple*, we looked for a theory in which poetry could be considered as a strategy towards temperance, a strategy devised to help readers impose order on their lives. For this purpose, we turned to a cognitive theory of culture, and reworked it to account for Herbert's pastoral poetics, which posits that poetry, as musical, mimetic patterning of language, constitutes a form of self-control, supervised by the ideal parson and, ultimately, by Christ. In his theory of cognitive evolution, Donald distinguishes three cognitive strategies which can be employed to represent knowledge – mimetic, mythic, and theoretic – each of which can be connected to Herbert's pastoral mediation of temperance. Whereas mimetic cognition employs the individual body as a 'representational device' to represent knowledge, mythic cognition involves the (communal) employment of narratives to give meaning to experience, while theoretic cognition represents the structure of events, by employing external artefacts as memory-tools. Meta-cognition, or self-knowledge, is the activity of (re-)cognising cognitive processes; this monitoring of the operations of the individual and collective mind is a precondition of the processing of knowledge, and can itself be performed mimetically, mythically, and theoretically – that is, corporeally, by means of language, or by means of visualised graphs. A Donaldian theory of human cognition posits that mimetic meta-cognition is the cognitive structure that underlies what is, today, commonly understood as the experience of art. Art as mimetic meta-cognition is the ability to achieve self-reflection by means of concrete representations, such as dance or poetry; the perceptual qualities of artefacts, such as sound and writing, mediate mimetic cognition.

Making use of this theoretical framework, it becomes possible to study Herbert's poetics, his thinking on the pastoral and Christian life, and the specific effects that *The Temple* had on its readers, from a unified perspective. Generally suspicious of language, Herbert trusted only God's Word, presenting his poems as an experiential translation of the Bible, a lived example of a Christian life. As an artefact that generates mimetic meta-cognition, *The Temple* provides experiences of concrete events, which requires a distinct activity of readers, achieved by identifying with Herbert, who, in turn, identifies with Christ. While reading *The Temple*, one can

mimetically 'tune' one's self to a perfected representation of the dynamics of life by reading and re-enacting Herbert's framed experiences. This individual, imitative, experiential communication was at odds with the predominantly mythic, Christian culture in which Herbert lived and wrote. Herbert's poetry thus complemented the representational strategies available in a strictly doctrinal, Word-based community. Employing the poetic artefact as a tool, Herbert sought to complement conceptual doctrines with lived examples of how one was to integrate the Bible into life. Being both the creator and the most active reader of *The Temple* before his own death, Herbert refined his self-images first, only to pass them on to his readers with his demise.

From a Donaldian perspective, the self is a process that is necessarily involved in all forms of human cognition. Herbert, offering his writings as means to control this meta-cognitive process, was involved in all distinguishable modes of representation. He tended to mimetic representations in his pastoral exemplary life and in *The Temple*, reconfiguring and reliving the knowledge of the Bible, making it his own and offering these patterns to his readers. He partook in the communal process of maintaining doctrine where his poems tend to become mythic and doctrinal, and in his notes on Valdesso's *Considerations*. He offered a theoretical model of (Christian) life in his treatises on the body (*A Treatise of Temperance and Sobrietie*) and the Christian community (*A Priest to the Temple*). Thus, *the parson's completenesse* assumes its shape. Making use of all representational registers, Herbert sought to achieve exactness and completeness in the execution of his calling. He designed *The Temple* to fulfill a specific function in the community that he served as an Anglican priest. In his pastoral tool-box it stands out as an explicitly corporeal, mimetic self-reflective mode of representation.

In the sixth, synthesising chapter, pursuing the logic of the Herbertian / Donaldian cognitive perspective, I argued that the critical tradition which has concerned itself with Herbert and *The Temple* is itself a common practice, strongly bound to the principles of mythic cognition. This may explain why Herbert's poems have hardly been treated as means to an end: recognising the mimetic functioning of poetry goes beyond (or comes before) its interpretation. A theory of culture as cognition provides a framework in which mimesis can be freshly appreciated, as it makes a distinction between linguistic, mimetic, and theoretic representations, whereas more traditional work on Herbert tends to interpret art and culture as language practices which serve predominantly ideological purposes. Donald's theory also enables a reflection on the mythic confines of the tradition and on the basic issues at stake when trying to unite the tradition with theories derived from cognitive science. There is a fundamental gap to be bridged in the pursuit of a 'unity of knowledge', which was Herbert's primary concern in his earthly duties as a pastor, and which still is one of the main challenges awaiting the modern disciplines that study art and culture.

Bringing a specific historical poet within a general theory of culture, this research fits in with larger contemporary developments in the humanities. First, it offers a possible route to reconsider

a widely perceived crisis in the humanities, by proposing and putting into practice a methodology that allows us to re-establish the connection with the natural sciences. Making use of knowledge generated through the empirical rigour of the cognitive sciences, poetry is modelled as a specific cognitive strategy. More obviously relevant, perhaps, for the study of early modern culture, a theory of art as an advanced form of the corporeal enactment of knowledge may complement the growing critical interest in the early modern body, the passions and (sensual) experience. Second, this research incorporates the theory of evolution, the dominant paradigm in the exact and social sciences, in the study of early modern culture, not by employing specific concepts derived from Darwinian thought in the interpretation of the contents of this culture, but rather by setting Herbert's time in the larger scope of our evolutionary history. My aim was to achieve some form of interdisciplinarity rather than interdiscursivity, since, as I have argued in chapter 4, the sciences do not distinguish themselves by offering stories about the origin of the human race, but rather by providing visualisations of this process: interdisciplinary research should not be regarded as the merging of critical and scientific discourse. Combining the critical narratives on Herbert with the abstract visualisations of cognitive theory thus requires a form of interdisciplinarity that respects the gap between the kinds of knowledge produced in the humanities and the sciences, yet attempts to bridge this divide wherever possible. In this research, I have tried to stick to these principles: Herbert-criticism and the cognitive theory are kept separate in the initial three chapters, while I have tried to indicate their parallels and possible ways of collaboration in the chapters four and five. Rather than focusing on the differences between early modern culture and our own, my study focuses on universal human characteristics, which we, studying Herbert, share with Herbert himself.

*7.2 A Herbertian reflection*

The 'afflictions' that form the catalysts of Herbert's poems can stand for the demands that a changing world makes on the human cognitive apparatus. To Herbert such typical historicist questions as 'how' and 'when' and the fundamental scientific question 'why' would count as afflictions. Scholarly work is yet another attempt to regain order in a problematic world. The particular 'affliction' addressed in the introduction to this study was whether we could relate the meaning of Herbert's verse to its function, seeing that his own prose and the reception of his verse licensed such a question. This resulted in the subsequent chapters, all of which are acts of recognition designed to regain the 'temper' in our understanding of Herbert. Indeed, the process towards this end resembles Herbert's own, in the tripartite division of *The Temple* in the introductory moralising poem of *The Church Porch*, into the central lyrics of personal affliction and the ordering of self and time in *The Church*, and the long visionary poem about the past and future of the church in *The Church Militant*. In this particular study, *The Church Porch*, our outlining of the issues at stake in the introduction, led to *The Church* in chapter 2-5. In this central section

I explored ways to understand and explain how the poetic termpering works when regarded in the light of Herbert's own reflections in prose, in turn embedded in a Donaldian theory of culture. Chapter 6 may count as a modest *Church Militant*, mapping the larger currents in which this focused study of Herbert can be placed, indicating possible courses to be taken in future research. With this study of the process of tuning in Herbert's *Temple* in hand, it should be possible to move forward, to study Herbert anew with a deepened understanding of the pastoral function of his poetry, and to make new attempts at studying (early modern) culture from the perspective of modern cognitive science. If so, this conclusion is the equivalent of 'L'Envoy', "the author's parting words,"[1] the tail-end of The *Temple*, its sending off. It should serve to remind us that, according to a Herbertian theory of life, one is continually confronted with afflictions. It is the critic's task to deal with these challenges creatively, with all the forms of cognition with which we are blessed, under the constant guidance of self-scrutiny (a process that allows one to recognise and justify the chosen cognitive strategies), thus aiming for more exact explanations and understandings in a measured, controlled manner.

Rather than labelling this study as either theoretical or historical, it has turned out as a Herbertian mixture of both: equal importance has been attributed to the (critical) reception of Herbert's works and to cognitive theory. In keeping with Herbert's aversion against making artificial, conceptual distinctions, I have attempted to show that cognitive theory and the analysis of specific historical literary artefacts are separate disciplines which can justifiably be combined in a single study, if one observes and cultivates the specific characteristics of each. A historical, Herbertian framing of contemporary theory, however, should not lead to incoherence in the theory itself; this is why I chose to start the fourth chapter with a basic analysis of memory and culture, arriving relatively late at a cognitive account of art and poetry. The parallel structures of chapter 3 and 4 should make clear that the concepts at stake in Herbert's attempts at framing Christian lives refer to (the structure of) the same underlying process as the concepts employed in a Donaldian cognitive theory of art and culture. By applying this analogy, I have tried to ensure an Herbertian perspective on cognitive theory, staying true to his own, historically determined yet universal concerns, and to modern knowledge available on the working of the human mind. The structure of these chapters, then, is explicitly non-argumentative: the aim there is to present two concurring systematic representations of human life.

In cultural criticism the distinction between interpretation and analysis is not always clear. The main task of criticism is interpretation: a constant communal practice, by means of which critics define their terminology and assign meaning to those artefacts of the past they have chosen to study. Criticism tends to mimetic activity when critics seek to incorporate their self-reflective reading experiences in their understanding of literature; it tends to analysis, theoretic

[1] Cf. Wilcox 2007, p. 686.

cognition, when they make use of general (structural) assumptions that direct the course of their arguments. A justification of literary criticism based in cognitive theory demands that lines be drawn between these distinctly different kinds of cognitive strategies, thus demarcating the separate tasks that one can set oneself when studying literature, rather than combining these fundamentally different acts of recognition in one discipline, which can lead to all sorts of confusion, and problems of justification. The future of criticism, currently at stake, would seem clearer, and easier to explain to outsiders, when critical practice is restricted to the re-making and re-establishing of acceptable interpretations of historical texts. The primary task of critics would then be both to re-create art from the past, and to create a consensus on the meaning of these historical/modern artworks in our own modern culture. Ideally, the developing of general assumptions about the structure of art and culture can then be left to disciplines more aptly equipped to ground these assumptions.

The use of a Donaldian theory of art and culture should not be restricted to devotional art or to poetry, nor to the study of a specific era. If art congrues with mimetic self-reflective cognitive processes, it becomes important to determine the structure of a given culture, as a historically specific mixture of mimetic, mythic, and theoretic cognitive strategies. Having determined this structure, it becomes possible to assess to what extent art reflects on, and intervenes in, culture; this information can be gained by studying the reception of art in that specific era. Herbert's case is specifically apt for such an approach. The culture in which he lived was a religious one, answering to a predominantly mythic structure, the reception of his work is relatively well documented, while Herbert's poetics fits in with his picture of the pastoral life. Yet, while Herbert seems ideally suited to be studied from a cognitive perspective, this does not mean that this theory only applies to Herbert; it is, rather, a theory of art and culture founded on general principles, applicable to all eras and artefacts that are being studied in the humanities.

### *7.3 'Many things are lost for want of asking'*

In his thinking on the pastoral profession, George Herbert combined a serving, instrumental life with great intellectual and artistic ability. He demanded of the ideal country parson that "Love [be] his business, and aime" (*Priest* 284). To him, spiritual love was both a 'mark to aime at', and a practical activity. As he sought to avoid distinguishing between the practical and the ideal, between his actual life and his reflection on this life, love as business and aim could coincide. Living in the present, re-membering his life by means of the Christian past that was recorded in the Word, Herbert put the Bible to practice. Uniting readers, creating a community that self-reflects in the same 'measured' poetic space, *The Temple* contributes to teaching this activity to others. Herbert's poetry was part of his pastoral behaviour, which was directed at establishing unity, resolving oppositions, and choosing the middle, temperate, way, not unlike the trajectory of the Anglican Church. His constant aiming for unity and neatness required incessant activity

on the part of the country parson. Idleness was to be eschewed, because the confrontation with afflictions would never end. When we remind ourselves that cognition involves the constant activity of self-monitoring in interaction with the world, it should be clear that Herbert's thinking about the embodied mind is very close indeed to current cognitive theory. Modern empirical theorising thus gives us a basis to rethink Herbert's own presuppositions concerning the pastoral life and *The Temple*. If 'many things are lost for asking', I hope to have provided new answers as well as new questions in our study of Herbert, and, besides, of art and culture in general. Although seemingly 'new', these questions informed Herbert's own principles of life; they are therefore crucial if we want to experience, understand, and explain his poetry, pastoral care, and thinking.

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# samenvatting

**Tuning the Self: George Herbert's Poetry as Cognitive Behaviour**

George Herberts *The Temple* (1633) vormt het onderwerp van deze studie. Herberts gedichten genoten in zijn eigen tijd een grote populariteit. In de twintigste en eenentwintigste eeuw van onze jaartelling is zijn reputatie als de grootste religieuze dichter van de Engelse Renaissance algemeen erkend. Zijn heiligverklaring binnen de Anglicaanse kerk kan hiervan getuigen.

George Herbert (1593-1633), afkomstig uit een adellijke familie gevestigd in Montgomery (Wales), genoot een kort doch welbesteed leven. Dit leven werd gekenmerkt door een lenige geest en een zwak lichaam. Wegens zijn broze gesteldheid was Herbert niet in staat in het leger te dienen, zoals gebruikelijk in zijn familie; hij richtte zich dan ook op het ontwikkelen van intellectuele en spirituele vaardigheden. Hij was een uitmuntende student in zijn jonge jaren, in snel tempo werkte hij zich op tot een vooraanstaand intellectueel en publiek spreker aan de universiteit van Cambridge. Aan deze betrekking kwam rond 1625 een abrupt einde, toen Herbert besloot zich van de academie af te keren, om zich te kunnen wijden aan het priesterschap. Enkele jaren na zijn afscheid van Cambridge, in 1630, werd hij officieel beëdigd als priester in Bemerton (nu deel van Salisbury), een kleine plattelandsgemeente in het zuiden van Engeland. Na enkele jaren toegewijde dienst stierf hij op 1 maart 1633. Zijn gedichten, bezorgd door zijn boezemvriend Nicholas Ferrar, beleefden kort daarna hun eerste druk.

Herbert liet meer na dan alleen gedichten. Hij produceerde twee uitgebreide traktaten, *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobriety,* een traktaat betreffende het betrachten van matiging en soberheid, en *A Priest to the Temple*, een verhandeling over het ideale gedrag van een plattelandsgeestelijke. Een hypothese die aan de basis ligt van deze studie is dat de door Herbert voorziene functie van zijn gedichten het best kan worden begrepen in het licht van zijn theoretische, prozaïsche verhandelingen. In deze verhandelingen bespreekt hij de strategieën die men kan aanwenden om het eigen leven op orde te krijgen en te houden. Hij betrekt daarbij de principes van het matigen en gezond houden van het menselijk lichaam op de Christelijke gemeenschap; de priester speelt hierin een cruciale rol. Herbert zag het als des priesters voornaamste taak om de harmonie te bewaren binnen een geloofsgemeenschap. Alles wijst erop dat hij voor de Christelijke dichter eenzelfde taak voorzag.

Het bewaken van de harmonie in het leven vormt ook een van de belangrijkste thema's in *The Temple.* Keer op keer laat Herbert zien hoe de sprekers die hij opvoert heen en weer worden

geslingerd tussen wanhoop en vertrouwen, afhankelijk van hun verstandhouding met God. Uit zijn laatste woorden die hij, volgens de overlevering, aan zijn gedichten wijdde, kunnen we opmaken dat hij een specifiek doel voor ogen had voor zijn gedichten: ze moesten, vrij vertaald, hun werk doen ten bate van de zielenrust van zijn lezers. Hoe zijn lyriek dit zou kunnen bewerkstelligen liet Herbert verder in het midden, maar uit zijn ontwerp voor een ordelijk Christelijk leven kunnen we veel afleiden. Herbert zag de wereld, Gods schepping, als doortrokken van een muzikale samenhang. Het letterlijk in de pas lopen met deze samenhang zou betekenen dat men in goede gezondheid verkeerde, het uit de pas lopen – het ervaren van disharmonie – leidde tot zonde en ziekte, afwijkend van Gods patronen. Het beoogde effect van *The Temple* was dan ook om de lezers in harmonie te brengen met God (zo kunnen we de titel van deze studie, 'Tuning the Self', ook begrijpen).

Maar hoe diende dit precies in zijn werk te gaan? Waarom koos Herbert nu juist gedichten om zijn lezers fysiek en spiritueel te genezen en gezond te houden? Hier blijft Herbert rijkelijk vaag, en ook de moderne aan zijn werk gewijde kritiek kan hier geen helder uitsluitsel over geven. Om meer duidelijkheid te krijgen over Herberts denksysteem en de beoogde functie van zijn gedichten kunnen we ons wenden tot de cognitiewetenschap. In deze moderne discipline richt men zich op het functioneren van lichaam en geest, deze beschouwend als verwante of zelfs identitieke processen, en op de rol die kunst en literatuur in deze processen zouden kunnen spelen. Om te beantwoorden aan Herberts grondige, systematische benadering van het leven, is in dit onderzoek gekozen voor een soortgelijk cognitief theoretisch raamwerk. Dit zou, in navolging van Herbert, in abstracte termen de mogelijkheden in kaart moeten brengen die mensen hebben om hun leven en zichzelf op orde te brengen, met een verklaring van de kunst, en de poëzie in het bijzonder, in deze processen. Voor dit doel is de alomvattende theorie van de cognitieve evolutie van de mens, ontwikkeld door de Canadese neurowetenschapper Merlin Donald, uiterst geschikt. Donald baseert zijn theorie op onderzoeksgegevens verkregen in uiteenlopende disciplines als de antropologie, de neurowetenschappen, de archeologie en de ontwikkelingspsychologie. Hij beschrijft de cognitieve evolutie van de mens in drie opeenvolgende stadia, elk samenhangend met een veranderende manier om kennis te delen: de mimetische cognitie, waarin de lichamelijke motoriek dient als medium om kennis te genereren (bijvoorbeeld gezichtsuitdrukkingen); de mythische cognitie, waarin het gebruik van taal het delen van kennis reguleert; en de theoretische cognitie, waarin artefacten worden aangewend als externe geheugens. Een cruciaal proces, zo suggereert Donald, om deze specifiek menselijke vormen van cognitie aan te sturen is metacognitie, wat het 'kennen van het eigen kennen' behelst. Metacognitie is nauw verwant aan zelfbewustzijn en –regulatie, en kan, net als de 'gewone' cognitie, gestalte krijgen op mimetische, mythische, en theoretische wijze. Donald associeert de mimetische metacognitie met kunst: met kunst kijken we middels 'concrete' verlengstukken van het lichaam naar onszelf. De kunstenaars taak is om deze verlengstukken zo te maken dat ze geschikt zijn om deze processen op gang te

brengen. Hiernaast kunnen we ook nog de mythische metacognitie, zelfreflectie middels verhalen, onderscheiden, en de theoretische metacognitie, waarin men probeert de structuur van het eigen kennen te ontdekken.

Als vorm van kunst zou poëzie ook (gedeeltelijk) moeten beantwoorden aan een mimetische metacognitieve structuur; zij onderscheidt zich van andere kunstvormen in het medium waarmee ze haar functie vervult. In poëzie wordt taal concreet vormgegeven: de concrete, waarneembare aspecten van taal (klank, verschijningsvorm, etc.) dienen als ordeningsprincipes waarmee dit gebeurt. Hierin gelijkt poëzie op de vroege, voortalige, interactie tussen moeder en kind, die normaalgesproken de basis vormt van ieders sociaal gedrag. In deze interactie is het gebruik van taal ondergeschikt aan het een-op-een afstemmen van motorische patronen, waarbinnen het kind in staat wordt gesteld om 'in samenspraak' met de moeder een rudimentair zelfbeeld te ontwikkelen. Deze mimetische, zelfreflectieve basis van de poëtische vorm zien we terug in het ontwerp en de receptie van *The Temple.* Herbert werd in zijn eigen tijd gezien als een maker, een perfecte ambachtsman die zijn gedichten schiep als schakels tussen de individuele Christen en God. De fysieke basis van deze gedichten is evident. Deze zien we allereerst terug in de betekenis: Herbert schenkt ruimschoots aandacht aan de fysieke ongemakken van het leven, en de motorische handelingen die kunnen leiden tot herstel (zie bijvoorbeeld het gedicht 'JESU' waar de inleiding mee begint). Maar om de betekenis is het mij hier niet te doen. Belangrijker in Herberts denken is dat zijn gedichten ook een fysiek, mimetisch effect moesten sorteren. Dit *effect*, het matigen van lichamelijke processen, waaronder de emoties, kunnen we nog het beste vergelijken met volgen van een dieet: door het gedrag te matigen zou men zichzelf stabieler maken, en zo kunnen wapenen tegen een veranderlijk leven.

Herbert maakt in zijn traktaten duidelijk dat zelfcontrole en zelfkennis voorwaarden zijn om deze matiging te bewerkstelligen. De mens moet zichzelf constant in kaart brengen om zijn fysieke en mentale processen te kunnen reguleren. Onder matiging moeten we in deze context dan ook niet verstaan dat men het leven en haar geneugten zou moeten afzweren: het gaat Herbert veeleer om het bereiken van een, per persoon verschillende, kloppende balans. De theorie van Donald laat zien hoe men deze zelfkennis kan verkrijgen: poëzie kan men inzetten om mimetische metacognitie te genereren. Donalds theorie geeft dus een structurele verklaring voor Herberts gebruik van poëzie in zijn pastorale leven. Met *The Temple* kon hij bewerkstelligen dat zijn lezer, zijn gemeenschap, zelfkennis zou vergaren door zich te identificeren met de vormgegeven personae in de gedichten. Deze kennis is, als we Donalds theorie volgen, niet ideologisch of analytisch (mythisch of theoretisch), maar mimetisch: zij wordt verkregen door de priester/dichter individueel te volgen in zijn worstelingen met het leven, en zijn constante strijd met God. Als we de logica van Herberts denken volgen, zou men deze zelfkennis moeten inzetten om een betere balans te verkrijgen in het eigen leven. Vanuit een evolutionair perspectief is dit logisch: een goed gereguleerde gemeenschap heeft een grotere kans om te overleven dan een

gemeenschap die zichzelf niet kent en controleert. Herberts uiteindelijke doel met dit constante streven naar zelfbalans, echter, is dat men de weg vrij maakt voor Gods wil. Door al het onnodige uit te bannen (dit is wat matiging voor Herbert in essentie inhoudt) kan men de ruimte scheppen om zich te voegen naar de schepping. Alle zelfregulerende activiteit is uiteindelijk gericht op het kunnen ontvangen van de goddelijke genade.

Donalds theorie kan ook worden gebruikt om de kritische traditie die zich in de voorgaande eeuw rond *The Temple* heeft gevormd te beschouwen. Deze traditie wordt gekenmerkt door mythische cognitie. Critici hebben zich over het algemeen gecommitteerd aan bepaalde ideologieën, om vervolgens de door hen bestudeerde teksten in het licht van deze 'metaverhalen' te interpreteren. Interdisciplinair onderzoek, bijvoorbeeld het verweven van de interpretatie van teksten en de cognitiewetenschap, komt in deze traditie vaak neer op het inpassen van concepten om reeds bestaande overtuigingen te bevestigen. Een dergelijk gebruik van cognitiewetenschappelijke kennis zou het denken van Herbert geen recht doen. Herbert ontwierp, in zijn eigen tijd en met de middelen voorhanden, een alomvattende systematiek die hij geschikt achtte om het Christelijk leven te bedwingen. Hoewel ideologie onmiskenbaar een rol speelt in deze systematiek, is deze vooral theoretisch, analytisch van aard: hij richtte zich op processen, de dynamiek die het leven zou kenmerken, en probeerde de structuur van deze processen te onderkennen. Willen wij deze systematiek met hulp van moderne kennis doorgronden, dan dienen we daar eenzelfde, logisch samenhangende, systematiek tegenover te stellen: en die vinden we in het werk van Donald. Uit al Herberts geschriften blijkt dat hij, zowel in de kunst als in zijn denken, probeerde om het mythische karakter van zijn tijd te compenseren. Het is de ironie van de geschiedenis dat Herberts (vroeg-) moderne lezers voornamelijk hebben geprobeerd om hem te begrijpen met behulp van religieuze en seculiere mythen. Deze studie stelt zich ten doel om deze pogingen aan te vullen met een analyse van Herberts denken, om zo tot een completere waardering van zijn priesterschap en dichtkunst te komen.

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